DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 437 560 CE 079 646

AUTHOR	Seyfried, Erwin; Kohlmeyer, Klaus; Furth-Riedesser, Rafael
TITLE	Supporting Quality in Vocational Training through Networking. CEDEFOP Panorama.
INSTITUTION	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Thessaloniki (Greece).
ISBN	ISBN-92-828-8368-X
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	75p.
AVAILABLE FROM	CEDEFOP, P.O. Box 22427, Thessaloniki, 55102, GREECE (catalogue no. HX-26-99-271-EN-C: free). Fax: 30-31-49-01-02; e-mail: dw@cedefop.eu.int.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Education; Articulation (Education); Case Studies; Cooperative Planning; *Educational Cooperation; *Educational Improvement; *Educational Quality; Foreign Countries; Government School Relationship; Influences; Literature Reviews; *Partnerships in Education; Postsecondary Education; School Business Relationship; School Community Relationship; Secondary Education; *Social Networks; Synthesis; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS	*Europe

ABSTRACT

The extent to which network cooperation between the general education system, vocational training institutions, business enterprises, social partners, and political decision makers affects quality development in vocational training was examined through a literature review and synthesis of eight case studies in the following seven European countries: Portugal, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and the Republic of Ireland. In all cases, the primary motivation for creating a network was the existence of problems that the vocational training institutions could not solve on their own. In the networks created, cooperation increased actors' room to maneuver and extended their problem-solving capabilities. All the networks studied overcame existing inadequacies and improved the functioning of their vocational training systems. Network activities were consistently directed toward changing the structural context in which vocational training occurs, and it was those changes in frame conditions that resulted in improvements in the quality of available vocational training measures. The case studies demonstrated the role of state actors in initiating and promoting local networks, and established that the efficiency of networks is highly dependent on the creation of adequate management and steering structures. (Contains 110 references and the case study authors' addresses.) (MN)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 437 560

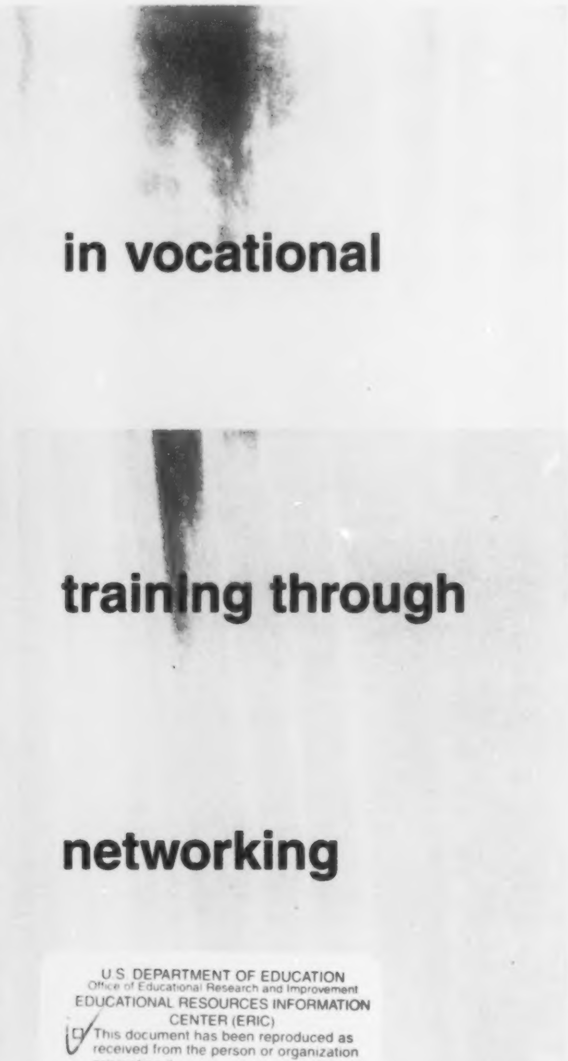
CE079646

CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

PANORAMA

Supporting quality in vocational training through networking



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J Van Rens

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Supporting quality in vocational training through networking

Authors:
Erwin Seyfried
Klaus Kohlmeyer
Rafael Furth-Riedesser
(FHVR-FBAE Berlin)

February 1999

on behalf of
CEDEFOP – European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

Edited by Tina Bertzeletou under the responsibility
of Stavros Stavrou, Deputy Director – CEDEFOP

Thessaloniki 1999

Published by:
CEDEFOP – European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
Europe 123, GR-57001 THESSALONIKI (Pylea)

Postal address:
PO Box 22427, GR-55102 THESSALONIKI

Tel. (30-31) 490 111
Fax (30-31) 490 020
E-mail: info@cedefop.gr
Homepage: www.cedefop.gr
Interactive website: www.trainingvillage.gr

The Centre was established by Regulation (EEC) No 337/75 of the Council of the European Communities, last amended by Council Regulation (EC) No 251/95 of 6 February 1995 and Council Regulation (EC) No 354/95 of 20 February 1995.

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet. It can be accessed through the Europa server (http://europa.eu.int).

Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication.

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2000

ISBN 92-828-8368-X

© European Communities, 2000
Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Printed in Belgium

Preface

For some years now CEDEFOP has been concerned with questions of quality development in vocational training.[1] Most recently, it commissioned a series of studies, e.g. on the application of quality indicators in university education and the health sector. The present study on quality development in vocational training via local networks forms part of this series. With it, CEDEFOP intends to supplement and round off the previous more theoretical reflections on aspects of quality with empirical questions on the practical implementation of quality in the vocational training system.

The study is based on the principle question of whether and to what extent network cooperation between the general education system, vocational training institutions, business enterprises, social partners and political decision makers has an innate potential for improving the quality and flexibility of training opportunities, supporting innovations and enhancing employment prospects for participants in vocational training measures. The study aims to show whether and how the implementation of quality via cooperation between the above-mentioned network actors can be promoted and put into practice.

The study's methodological approach consists of analysing local networks in the field of vocational training from various European Member States and examining their individual contributions to quality development. Given that the use of quality indicators in vocational training is still in its infancy everywhere, it would have been over-ambitious to carry out a comparative study between the various countries. Instead, a case study approach was chosen. This study is thus a synthesis of eight case studies which were carried out in seven European countries on the subject of quality development and networking. The following experts were involved in the production of these case studies:

- Emilia Andrade, Portugal
- Bernd de Boer, the Netherlands
- Rafael Furth-Riedesser and Klaus Kohlmeyer, Germany
- Pier Luigi Isola, Mauro Cavina and Maurizio Mirri, Italy
- Ads Koster, the Netherlands
- Maria Hughes, United Kingdom
- Kicki Stridh, Sweden
- Dr Anton Trant and Sean Trant, Republic of Ireland

The coordination of the research and the synthesis of the case studies has been carried out by the Research Unit for Vocational Training and the Labour Market and Evaluation (FBAE) at the FHVR Berlin. The case studies are based on a common methodology elaborated by the FHVR-FBAE which contains precise instructions for the selection of the networks. In addition, the FHVR-FBAE also defined which objective data was to be collected on the network in question and provided guidelines on conducting interviews with the relevant network actors.

---

[1] Cf. Van den Berghe, W. (1996) Quality issues and trends in vocational education and training in Europe. Luxembourg.

In spite of this common methodological framework, the differing objectives and subject matter of the networks mean that the case studies are very heterogeneous. Overall however, it is precisely for this reason that they provide an excellent insight into the empirical complexity of the relationship between network and quality development. Thanks to the broad range of cases examined, it has also been possible to identify the network actors' differing points of view and interests in relation to quality in vocational training.

As a result, we have succeeded in compiling interesting answers and insights into our initial question: the study helps us understand the dynamics of network development and it describes the role of various network actors, documents the challenge of different developmental stages in network cooperation and points out the areas of the vocational training system in which local networks can contribute to quality development as well as showing how adequately quality indicators can be developed in cooperation.

We would like to thank expressly the authors of the case studies for their substantial contributions. This report could not have been produced without the remarkable empirical experiences of the networks in the case studies and the descriptive richness of the studies themselves. Our special thanks go to Mike Hembury who made the translation from German into English.

Tina Bertzeletou
Project co-ordinator
CEDEFOP

Stavros Stavrou
Deputy Director
CEDEFOP

Table of contents

Preface 1

1. Introduction 5

2. Research approach and methods 9

2.1 Definition of networking and quality 9
2.1.1 Local cooperation and network formation 9
2.1.2 Quality in the context of vocational training 10
2.1.3 Quality in the network context 12

2.2 Enactment of the case studies 14
2.2.1 Selection of the case studies 14
2.2.2 Enactment of the surveys 14

2.3 Interview guidelines 16

2.4 Enactment of the study 16

3. The networks on quality 19

3.1 National characteristics in the discussion on quality 19

3.2 Outline of the case studies 24
3.2.1 Germany: 'Quality – setting an example' 24
3.2.2 Ireland: 'The integrated area partnership' 25
3.2.3 Italy: 'Cooperation and the culture of quality' 27
3.2.4 The Netherlands I: 'Quality management: a process of quality control' 28
3.2.5 The Netherlands II: 'Target group integration via concentration of resources' 29
3.2.6 Portugal: 'Quality through networking in a vocational school' 30
3.2.7 Sweden: 'Schools and enterprises sharing their resources jointly' 31
3.2.8 United Kingdom: 'the university for industry' 32

3.3 Summary of the most important results of the case studies 33

4. Quality through networking – an analysis of the case studies 35

4.1 Networking actors and their functions 35
4.1.1 Founding actors 35
4.1.2 Key actors and managers of change 37
4.1.3 Top-down versus bottom-up? 38

4.2 Networking and the question of quality 39
4.2.1 Approaches to a definition of quality 39
4.2.2 Application of quality norms versus the development of intrinsic quality standards? 42

4.3 Indicators and instruments of quality development 43
4.3.1 Indicators of objective achievement 43
4.3.2 Instruments of quality management 46

4.4 Stages in the development of networks and quality-oriented management: risks and opportunities 49

4.5 Barriers and hindrances to network development 53
4.5.1 Starting problems for the networks 53
4.5.2 Problems of quality development 54

4.6 Preconditions for successful networking 55

4.7 Summary 56

5. Conclusions and recommendations 59

5.1 Local networking as a concept for system innovation 59

5.2 State actors as networking catalysts 61

5.3 Future development and funding requirements of the networks 62

References 65

Authors of the case studies 71

Tables

Table 1: Quality aspects of vocational training from the perspective of individual groups of actors 40

Table 2: Exemplary indicators for measurement of quality characteristics in network activities 43

Table 3: Steering and control instruments used by networks 48

Illustrations

Illustration 1: Interface between network activities and quality development 13

Illustration 2: Networks on quality 20

Illustration 3: Development of networks and quality management 52

Illustration 4: Interface between network development and quality improvement 60

1. Introduction

The concept of local networking is gaining increasing recognition on a European-wide, if not global, basis. With its origins in the participatory principles of social and political grass-roots movements, its original intention was directed against the exertion of central control and domination and towards the empowerment of actors directly involved at local level. In the meantime the concept of local networking has largely lost its subversive appearance. In general it is regarded as a necessary bottom-up supplement to top-down procedures. According to the dominant perspective, the larger and more complex the system, the more necessary it is to transfer some of the decision-making away from the top down to local actors working at lower levels. The concept of local networking reflects the political concept of subsidiarity and the related tendency to decentralize decision-making. Centralized policy formulation needs to be enhanced by bottom-up procedures and the implementation of policies requires greater harmonization with local circumstances. This process of displacing responsibility and competence to the local level is due primarily to two factors:

- There is increasing acknowledgement of the fact that this manner of working makes it possible to take advantage of the detailed knowledge and skills available on the ground and to assess correctly the alternatives for action offered by the central policies. By opening up greater space for decision-making on the part of local actors, they are also given greater responsibility for their own actions. From a psychological point of view this also means that the actors become intrinsically motivated to recognize and exploit their own potential. Processes of this type can help to put the endogenous potentials of the local situation to better use. In addition, networking can open up new methods of communication and of passing on knowledge, turning the network into an independent source of innovation and development. This means that the communication between local actors serves not only to increase the efficiency of existing structures, but also, ideally, to create new structures offering qualitatively new developmental options.
- In the field of vocational training policy too, local networking is increasingly proving to be an important element in the bottom-up enhancement of political steering processes. In order to improve local cooperation between the actors of vocational training and employment policy and to make greater use of endogenous potentials, the European Commission has already published numerous documents as well as various action programmes.[2] Local networking between the general education system, the actors involved in vocational training, the local business community and administrations is increasingly being seen as a means of improving the quality and flexibility of vocational training.

Besides local networking the question of the quality of vocational training has also gained in significance in Europe over recent years. An intense discussion has been under way in many Member States for some years now on quality development and management in vocational training. This increasing importance is due in particular to the following causes:

---

[2] Cf. Europäische Kommission (1996), p. 42 and European Commission (1998b).

- On the one hand, rapid changes in the system of production and employment are placing ever-greater demands upon forward-looking vocational training and further training programmes. Growing international competition, the use of new technologies and the flexible organisation of work and products all have profound consequences on qualification demands. Manual and routine work is losing significance and being replaced by more complex work activities. High-tech workplaces and specialized services are increasingly changing the face of working life. Decentralisation, flat hierarchies, holistic and quality-oriented group work and increasing responsibilities at all levels require employees to acquire new skills. In addition to technical expertise, qualifications such as action-oriented, methodological and social skills are increasingly in demand, as well as innovation and creativity. The fundamental socio-economic transformation of the past few years has made it necessary both for employees to adapt their qualification profile as flexibly as possible to current vocational requirements, as well as for investment to be made in the development and communication of such new qualification profiles. Staff qualification is becoming an increasingly important factor for the development of business enterprises, due to the fact that higher levels of staff qualification also promote the ability and willingness of staff to perform well. Questions of vocational training and further training are of increasing significance in the discussion on European competitiveness.
- On the other hand, economic upheavals and resulting new qualification requirements also mean an increased risk for ever greater numbers of workers. The increased threat of unemployment faced by unskilled and semi-skilled workers in particular and the rising rate of long-term unemployment has focused the attention of politicians and the scientific community on the problem. Increasingly, all sectors of the working population are being affected by vocational exclusion, i.e. also qualified personnel (skilled workers and academics). As unemployment as a whole is on the rise, we are increasingly confronted by the question as to which forms of vocational training and further training actually do open up new employment prospects for the individual.

Hence the increasing importance of the question of quality in vocational training is linked to the changing demands placed on the qualifications of the employees. Vocational qualifications are the results of national education and training systems which participants attend for a considerable period of time. Qualification is a process in which various actors provide an input over many years and which is based on differing aims and basic conditions (laws, funding of the training, training institutions).

The search for criteria for the reorientation of the systems of training and education has provided extra impetus to the discussion on quality criteria in vocational training. How can we define 'quality'? On what quality criteria should the adaptation of training systems be based? How universally should quality be defined, in order to do justice to the new requirements?

One of the difficulties in the discussion on questions of quality in vocational training is that quality is defined and interpreted differently according to the interests and point of view of the individual actors involved. Most actors involved in vocational training usually define quality in terms of their own contribution, which is limited with regard to the 'end product'.[3] So far, little attention has been paid to the harmonization of objectives and quality standards between the actors involved or to cooperation in questions of quality development. It is the aim of this study to remedy this deficit. This study will examine what a holistic concept of quality might look like, a concept which integrates the perspectives of different actors, analyses quality as the common product of these actors and uses case studies to investigate whether and to what extent the quality of cooperation in local networks can be a means of improving vocational training.

---

[3] The end product can be understood as the conclusion of a stage of training, e.g. the attainment of vocational qualifications. However, the debate on lifelong learning has shown that such qualifications should only be understood as a transitional stage, which is why a product here can only represent an ideal aspiration to wholeness, rather than being a product which is finished at a specific stage of its development. Training produces products which are permanently in flux and which continually have to prove themselves anew.

2. Research approach and methods

The project 'Supporting quality in vocational training through networking' was commissioned by CEDEFOP and carried out by the Research Unit for Vocational Training, the Labour Market and Evaluation (FBAE) in cooperation with national research partners from various EU countries. A total of eight case studies were undertaken in seven European Member States, in order to find out how the quality of vocational training could be improved in the context of local networks. The countries involved were Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands (two case studies), Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Research specialists from the field of social sciences were selected as cooperation partners for each of the case studies. The researchers were distinguished by their practical orientation and their comprehensive knowledge of the vocational system in their countries.

Below we begin with a definition of the decisive concepts of our study, namely networking and quality. This will be followed by a more precise description of the methodological procedures used in the enactment of the case studies, before going on to present the results of the case studies themselves in the next chapter.

2.1 Definition of networking and quality

If we are to use precisely the two analytic areas contained in this study – local cooperation/networking and quality development – we must first undertake a conceptual definition. This includes both a conceptual delimitation from other similar ideas for action in the field of vocational training and further training, as well as a definition of our standpoint within the parameters of local vocational training policy.

2.1.1 Local cooperation and network formation

It has already been pointed out that cooperation and networking strategies have become the subject of discussion not only in vocational training but at almost all levels of political management; this applies especially to the area of regional development. As a first, general definition of the term we can make use of a sociological definition, which sees networks in general as a 'graph made up of a finite number of nodes and interconnected via the links between the nodes'. The term becomes more concrete when we look at the concept of social networks whose 'nodes' are represented by social or institutional actors and whose links 'depict the relations of the actors to each other'.[4]

This abstract definition becomes more tangible if we consider the objectives of networking. We can assume that network activities are characterized by a common field of activity or subject as well as by an intersection of common interests between the actors involved. The aim of networks can be to undertake joint activities, make the best use of existing resources or to represent common interests to decision makers external to the network. There is also the additional dimension of communicating or exchanging information, such as the transfer of innovations. With regard to the objectives on which the networking process is based, it is important to differentiate between the individual objectives of individual actors and the achievement of objectives for the network as a whole. The added value, which forms the core or a network, should ideally consist of greater attainment of individual objectives being made possible via the overall objectives of the network as a whole.

---

[4] Cf. Lexikon zur Soziologie (1988), p. 531.

It is also possible to undertake a further delimitation between networking and the more extensive field of cooperative relations by examining the actual structures of cooperation. The latter is understood as all joint activities undertaken by at least two actors. Hence cooperation can also be bilateral and limited to a one-off activity or to short-term forms of joint work.[5] Networking, by contrast, usually comprises a concentration of cooperative relations; and whilst these may include bilateral and short-term relations, they are always overlayed or supplemented by multilateral and long-term working relations. Thus a minimal level of network formation has been achieved when at least three actors form part of a cooperation agreement designed to last at least for the medium term. In the vocational training context, networks are characterized by the fact that they are constituted by cooperative relations between various institutions and consist of the coordination of joint working activities. The criterion of a network is only achieved when different institutions, acting independently in their specific fields, are included. However, in order to be able to speak of networking the actors must also share compatible, mutually complementary fields of activity linked in the medium or long term by a set of binational or multinational cooperations.

The performance capacity of a network increases in accordance with the extent to which it is not just a mere accumulation of identical or similar actors, but a structure covering different functions within a clear division of labour. Every member of the network functions within the structure according to their specific role and contributes the relevant resources towards the achievement of the overall network objective. Local vocational training cooperation and networks have various dimensions at their disposal which manifest themselves in the network design. If vocational training and further training is included in the context of regional development, this leads to different structures than the linking of school education and vocational training. Whilst the network activities of vocational training institutions may primarily be focused on the best use of resources, at the level of political management the emphasis may be on the modernisation of national or regional training structures. However, common to all levels of activity is the implicit or explicit presence of a quality-increasing aspect.

2.1.2 Quality in the context of vocational training

The public debate on qualitative aspects of vocational training services has gained considerably in significance over recent years. This, however, has little to do with a sudden surge of interest in the ideas on service quality which social scientists and social service providers have been developing since the 1960s. Instead, it is the concepts of quality established from a business management perspective which have led to an intense discussion on the transferability of quality management systems to the social services sector. In consequence this debate on the registering and increasing of service quality has often become limited to the 'question of the best possible translation' of quality control and quality management systems originally developed for business enterprises.

---

[5] On a more narrowly defined concept of partnership cf. the European Commission (1998), p. 8: 'A partnership is a process in which various actors from various sectors are involved and who have united to form a functional association in order to work towards an agreed goal. This process is based on democratic principles, supported by clearly defined structures and includes a process of continual evaluation which ensures that the results bring about an added value for their work'.

A central problem in the development of management models for raising service quality in vocational training is still the desire to provide a binding definition of quality as such, as well as of the appropriate criteria for its measurement and determination. There has been some progress made in this direction thanks to the attempts at certification of service providers in accordance with DIN ISO 9004/8402; quality is seen here as the totality of characteristics and distinguishing features relating to a service's suitability for the fulfilment of pre-established or predetermined requirements.

In addition, it is common for quality aspects to be subdivided into three categories which can also be used for the analysis of network activities. These three categories cover the vocational training process itself, the objectives and contents of vocational training and, as a third element, the context and frame conditions within which vocational training measures take place.

1. The category quality of structure covers the national and regional frame conditions, the general system and organisation of vocational training. At an institutional level the structural component of quality consists of personnel management, cooperation with other organisations and all changes in local and regional funding structures. Generally speaking the category is concerned with the conditions under which vocational training takes place.

2. Quality of process comprises all the aspects which directly affect the training process. Process quality is concerned with the question of which factors determine the training process and how the latter can be improved: what methods are used in the training process? Are these methods used effectively and in a manner appropriate to the participants? As a rule, the training process is improved by adapting and matching the pedagogical and didactic concepts to the specific conditions and requirements of the various target groups.

3. Quality of outcome is primarily concerned with the product, the envisaged result of the vocational training. Here it is a question of objectives and contents, the profile and the matching of a training measure. The results cover the composition of teacher and student materials, course curricula and examination requirements, as well as the form of certification and hence all the aspects of the training course which give it a generally recognized value.

The above-mentioned aspects of quality are also listed in Illustration 1 as the central target values, to which the activities of the network actors relate. However, the various actors of vocational training will perceive these quality aspects very differently.

If we consider the quality parameter as discussed in vocational training, it becomes evident that quality – aside from these criteria which have come to be recognized as fundamental – is composed of quite different factors, depending on the point of view of the observer. Some actors are concerned with the qualification of the trainers or with the equipment and classrooms available to the training institutions, others with the participants' evaluation of the course and its usefulness for them as individuals (motivation, employment prospects), whilst a third group, such as employers, may be primarily concerned with the relevance of the acquired qualifications for the workplace (practical orientation, social skills, etc.). In view of these 'multiple perspectives' on quality, a number of general parameters for quality were defined at the beginning of the study. These relate to the following aspects and questions:

- Quality within the organisation (management and organisation).
- Suitability of the human resources (staff ratio, staff qualifications).
- How do employees perceive the organisation?
- The point of view of participants in VET: how is the role of participant satisfaction assessed and included in the further development of VET provision?
- Internal and external communication structures.
- Usefulness of the knowledge and skills acquired for the labour process.
- Recognition of the acquired qualifications.

An examination of the discussions on determining quality and defining indicators for quality development at the level of European Member States shows that in practice considerable differences exist between the States. Thanks to the European funding programmes, there now exist extensive transnational contacts between vocational training institutions of Member States which are also supplemented by international cooperation at scientific level. These have provided a wide range of ideas towards quality development. In recent years CEDEFOP has also made an extensive contribution towards a European dimension of quality development in the field of vocational training, whereby studies commissioned by CEDEFOP are playing an increasingly important role in the development of generally applicable criteria and of a common strategy in quality development.

2.1.3 Quality in the network context

The concept of local cooperation and networking and the concept of the development of strategies to record and improve quality both represent central elements of the modernisation of vocational training at regional, national and European levels. Hence both concepts also relate to an identical field of activity and are both similarly influenced by frame conditions such as legislative or institutional structures and interests and the resulting strategies of political management.

In this respect this study is based in no small part on the assumption that the interplay between local networking and quality development can lead, or indeed, almost inevitably leads, to mutual influences and synergistic effects between both concepts.

Illustration 1: Interface between network activities and quality development

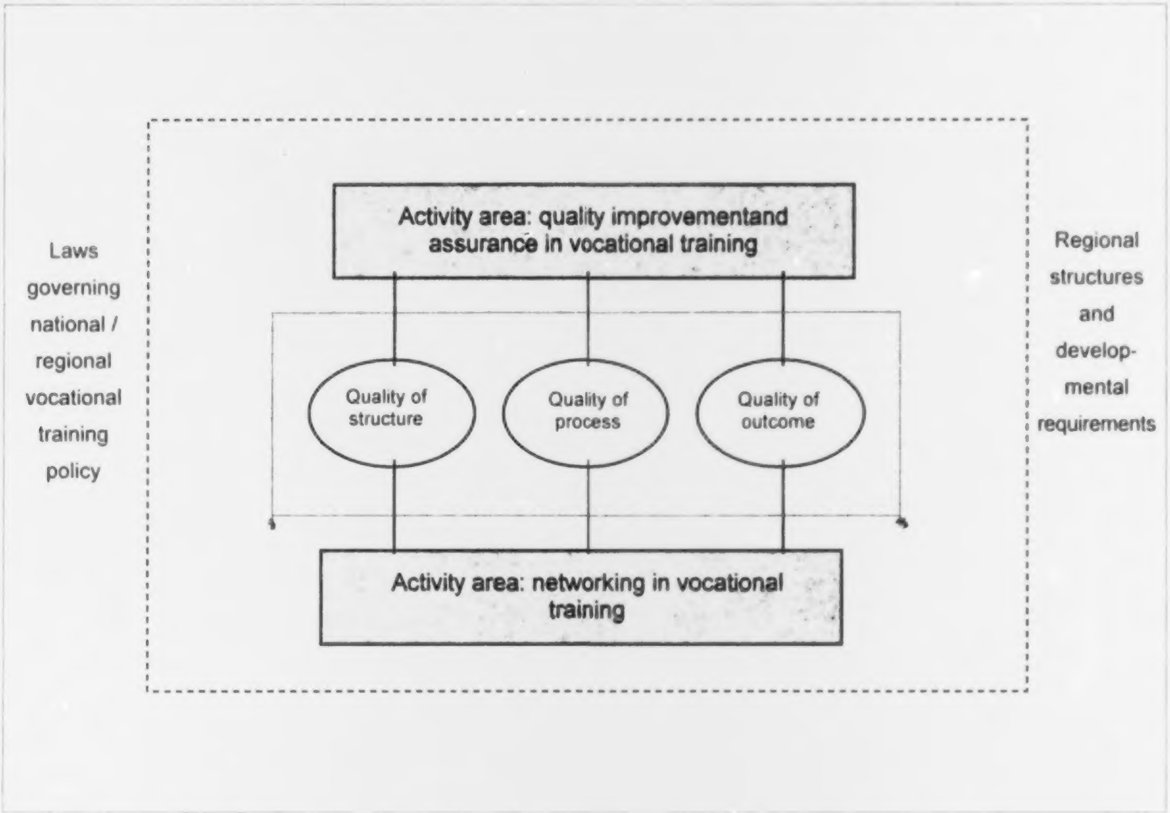

Laws governing national / regional vocational training policy
Activity area: quality improvementand assurance in vocational training
Quality of structure
Quality of process
Quality of outcome
Activity area: networking in vocational training
Regional structures and develop-mental requirements

Illustration 1 is intended to provide an initial schematic overview of the expected effective relations in the context of regional vocational training policy. Independently of the function and distinguishing features of local networks one can assume that elements of quality improvement are inherent in networks if only by virtue of the increased level of communication between the actors. From the opposite perspective, although the increase in quality of vocational training and further training is based on an adequate problem identification on the part of the individual vocational training organisations, their subsequent search for concepts with which to improve their own quality also leads to an increased need for exchange and communication. This search then ideally provides the starting point or basis for cooperation between the providers or with other vocational training actors. Thus for example, needs-oriented vocational training on the part of the service providers requires increased cooperation with small and medium-sized businesses. From a strategic point of view this approach facilitates both an anticipative vocational training policy and a reinforcement of the bridging function between training and the labour market. As these examples demonstrate, existing cooperations can hypothetically lead to a wide range of common objectives and activities, thus increasing the probability of an 'organic link' between networking activities and strategies for quality improvement.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

This study aims to examine the causal factors and effective relations between the concepts of quality and networking in the light of a number of different case studies. Below we discuss how the case studies were carried out and cite the empirical sources on which the further analyses were based.

2.2 Enactment of the case studies

In order to do justice to the numerous and highly differentiated facets of the question of quality in the European context, qualitative case studies were made use of during the development of the research project design. This was to ensure that national peculiarities and the complexity of a single case were taken into account, together with the objective of coming 'to understand its activity within important circumstances'.[6] Using standardized quantitatively-oriented data collation procedures it would presumably not have been possible to register adequately the various cooperation structures and networks which have arisen over time in the field of vocational training. It seemed by contrast that a depiction of the wide range of influences and effects which are possible between networking and quality could only be feasible with an open set of questions and a qualitatively-oriented research method.

2.2.1 Selection of the case studies

The following requirements were formulated for the selection of case studies:

- Case studies ought not to relate to innovative model projects, but rather to examples of national vocational training policy which are as representative as possible. The examples could come both from the field of primary vocational training and from the further vocational training sector.
- Selection of the case studies ought to take the subject of the research project into suitable consideration. That is to say that the selected case studies ought to contain an adequate amount of empirical material with regard to networking and quality.
- Case studies ought not to be limited to the presentation of successful practice, but also include the difficulties and obstacles which arose in the development of joint objectives for improvement of the quality of vocational training measures.

2.2.2 Enactment of the surveys

In order to accumulate the relevant information, guideline-based oral interviews with key actors of local VET provider networks were undertaken, either individually or in groups. The following key actors were interviewed in different case studies:

- technical college teachers;
- workplace trainers;
- business representatives;

---

[6] R. E. Stake (1995) The Art of Case Study Research, Thousand Oaks/USA.

- chamber of commerce representatives;
- local and regional political and administrative representatives responsible for vocational training;
- participants in vocational training measures;
- placement officers for vocational training, such as job centre/employment office and counselling service workers.

Results of the interviews were supplemented by the evaluation of additional material provided by the interview respondents. This included project reports and other publications as well as customer surveys carried out by networks or individual VET providers in the context of newly-introduced quality control measures. The term 'customer' refers both to participants in vocational training measures as well as to firms which had commissioned vocational further training measures.

The principle methodological approach chosen for examination of the selected case studies was that of case-related historical reconstruction. This was intended as a means of depicting the time span between the origins and the present day: the essential stages in the historical development of the network up to the present were reconstructed by means of interviews with key VET provider actors. The interviews started with the question what were the network actors' main intentions when they initiated local cooperation in questions of quality improvement? What were the problems and deficits which were the reason for the activity? What were the first steps? What action did key actors undertake? How were activities carried forward? What difficulties, resistance and barriers were they faced with? How could these be overcome? To trace the path between origins and the present state of development, interviewees were also asked whether they could identify various stages on the way to improvement in the quality of their vocational training measures. How would they characterize the basic stages? What were the decisive steps and obstacles on the way from one stage to another? Finally, questions were also asked regarding the situation currently achieved. What results has networking produced regarding quality improvement? What instruments of quality control have been developed and put into practice?

Historically, reconstructive case studies of this type tend to run the risk of positive exaggeration, so that every case becomes a success story. To avoid this risk, any critical overall assessment of the practical example under consideration had necessarily to include an assessment of what had been achieved as compared to the originally formulated objectives. What were the limits and problems of the solutions achieved so far, what are – from a critical perspective – the negative sides of the coin? Where is there further room for improvement, where does action need to be taken? This critical appraisal of current achievements was partly dealt with during the oral interviews. In addition, an assessment of achievements was also undertaken by means of interviews with network customers. These interviews were designed to provide an additional, external perspective on the network. This appeared necessary to provide an objective corrective to the frequent subjective distortions to the picture painted by key actors.

2.3 Interview guidelines

The interview guidelines furnished the common structure for the enactment of the survey, something of particular significance given the intended comparability of results in the European context. The guidelines provided the national experts with a binding basis for the interviews in order to gather data on comparable subjects from the network actors.

However, the guidelines should only be used to the extent that interviewees retain the possibility of contributing creatively, with reference to their own specific concerns, to the interview. The guidelines include precise instructions on obtaining objective data about the characterization of the network in question and on the description of the role and function of the various network actors.

2.4 Enactment of the study

The research project on networking and quality development began in March 1998. An initial understanding was reached with the selected national cooperation partners regarding objectives, question formulations and study methodology. In addition, there was a preliminary exchange of ideas on the selection of suitable case studies. In April 1998, this basis for cooperation was enlarged by means of a one-day workshop attended by all the cooperation partners. The guideline questions presented above formed the basis of the discussion. National experts presented the network projects which they envisaged as case studies and explained the knowledge they hoped to gain using the relevant research questions. Each expert presented three suggestions for potential case studies, one of which was ultimately selected. The selection was determined by two main criteria: there had to be an empirical and measurable basis for the research questions as formulated and the need to examine as broad an overall sample as possible, containing different examples of quality development. The case studies were carried out in the period from May to July 1998.

Questions for the interview guidelines

1. Frame data on the case study

- Which course of training? Local, regional or national context? Economic sector? Duration? Training regulations? Curricula? Usefulness of the training? Certification? Sponsor?
- Which persons and institutions were involved in the organisation and enactment of the training?
- Information on the trainees: Target group? How many participants? Age of participants? Education level? Vocational options and job prospects?

2. Starting situation of the local networks

- What were the actors' main intentions which led to local cooperation on questions of quality improvement?
- What were the first steps? How were activities carried forward?
- What were the contents of the cooperation?
- What were the difficulties, resistance and barriers to cooperation?
- How could these be overcome?

3. Description of the functions and roles of the individual actors in the network

- Who are the main sponsors/providers of training?
- What is the role of the State? Who teaches theory? Who teaches practice? What role does the local economy play in training? What role is played by trade unions and chambers of commerce and industry?

4. Stages on the path to improvement in the quality of VET provision

- What local experience exists with regard to quality improvement in vocational training?
- What role was played by local cooperation structures?
- What do the interviewed actors understand by the term quality? What are the criteria for quality improvement which networking is intended to achieve?
- What are the essential stages of development which can be distinguished?
- What were the decisive steps and obstacles on the way from one stage to the next?

5. Currently achieved state of quality improvement

- What results have so far been achieved regarding quality improvement and quality control? What instruments have been developed and put into practice?
- What are the limits and problems with solutions so far achieved?
- From a critical perspective what are the negative sides of the coin?
- Where is further development and action required?
- What objectives exist with regard to the further development of quality control systems?

6. Lessons to be learned

- What are the most important insights gained by individual actors with regard to the development of quality criteria in the local network?
- What general conclusions can be drawn from the relation between quality in vocational training and local cooperation?

3. The networks on quality

A total of eight case studies on local networks dealing with various aspects of quality development in vocational training were carried out in seven European Union Member States (for an overview see Illustration 2 below). As intended, these case studies represent a wide range of network approaches which also roughly reflect the state of the current discussion on quality in vocational training in the EU Member States involved.

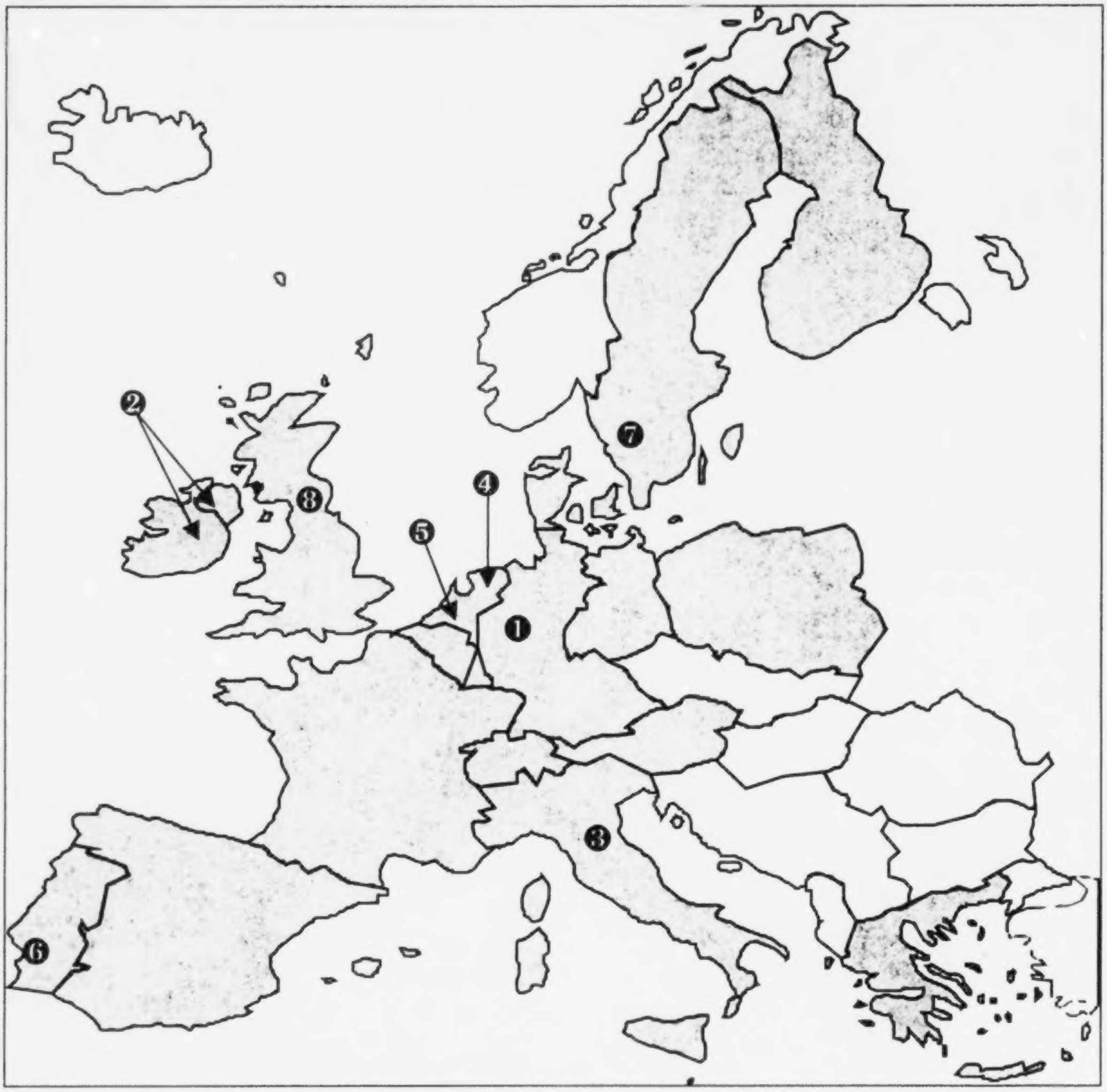
3.1 National characteristics in the discussion on quality

As a context for the case studies we provide below an initial outline of the basic characteristics of the debate on quality as determined by the national research partners in their own countries.

In *Germany,* the current debate on quality control and management was sparked by the question of the certifiability of training processes and institutions on the basis of ISO 9000. However, the background for the upsurge in interest in the discussion is the increased cost pressure on the vocational training providers. The intermingling of economic efficiency with quality aspects has led to a number of different results and tendencies. Whilst some institutions regard the quality debate as merely one more way of saving money, other providers have for some time been implementing process-oriented quality control systems on the basis of ISO 9000. In addition, there is an increasing number of providers and programmes which can be characterized on the basis of other criteria and norms. Otherwise, there is nothing new about the discussion on quality in the Federal Republic. For some time now, for example, all State funded vocational training measures have been obliged to provide potential participants with counselling prior to the course and undertake an assessment of their placement prospects on the labour market. The relevant State funding authorities also examine the measures with regard to content and the area covered by the training. There are three areas of vocational training in which efforts to improve quality standards have been under way for some time:

- in primary vocational training there is an attempt to undertake a forward-looking redefinition of training contents and to create new vocational profiles;
- in vocational further training there is to be greater clarity in the range of courses on offer, as well as implementation of binding quality standards;
- in the funding of disadvantaged groups there are attempts to improve chances of integration into the labour market and to develop appropriate training opportunities.

Illustration 2: Networks on quality



		EU-country[7]	networks
1	D	Germany	Innovationsdistrikt Köln
2	IRL	Ireland	Belfast/Dublin: The Integrated Area Partnership Springboard Opportunities
3	I	Italy	Emilia Romagna: Tavolo Regionale di Monitoraggio
4	NL	Netherlands	OverGelder: The Regional Training Centre
5	NL	Netherlands	PLB Praktikleerbedrijf Tilburg
6	P	Portugal	Alentejo: Quality through networking in a vocational school
7	S	Sweden	Halmstad: TEK – Schools and enterprises sharing their resources jointly
8	UK	United Kingdom	The University for Industry (UFI) – North East Pilot of England

---

[7] The case studies are listed according to the alphabetical order of their countries of origin. This is also the order in which they are discussed below.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The debate on quality has acquired a new dynamism triggered by the question of economizing and pressure towards increased economic efficiency: quality is increasingly becoming a comprehensive term for all efforts towards the modernisation and improvement of the range of vocational training measures on offer.

In the *Republic of Ireland,* strategies for quality improvement in vocational training are oriented towards four areas of activity. Under the heading of quality control a strategy is being pursued which aims at meaningful and participative assessment and certification arrangements, using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. In addition to the integration of assessment with other dimensions of VET curriculum such as aims, objectives, content and methodology, energy is also being put into the development of certification pathways with clearly articulated entry points and progression routes. The concept of institutional linkage aims to promote both the development of networks of providers and employers as well as consultation with further and higher education authorities about the acceptability of existing VET curricula and certification. Efforts are also being made to intensify cooperation between education and training providers. A third aspect of quality development in Ireland consists of putting the concept of 'lifelong learning' into practice. A central element of this strategy consists of guaranteeing access to VET regardless of age, special replacement strategies (learning how to learn) as well as the idea of preparation for work. Hence the concept as a whole goes well beyond the notion of paid employment. A fourth element of raising quality standards is concerned with reinforcing providers by means of support structures such as training of trainers, personal, educational and vocational guidance or improved study, resource and library facilities in general.

In *Italy,* the question of the quality of vocational training has clearly gained in significance over recent years. The necessity of investing in human capabilities and raising the quality of vocational training occupies a high priority in the discussion on the development of the country. The discussion is centered around the orientation of educational planning towards the needs of the local economy and the labour market. Two primary strategies to increase vocational training quality are currently under discussion:

- the achievement of intrinsic quality of services or products via the application of innovative concepts and methods oriented towards the qualification requirements of individual target groups, and
- starting out on the road towards ISO 9000 or total quality certification.

Certification is regarded as a potential answer to the problems mentioned, particularly with regard to the reorganisation of the vocational training system. It appears to be a suitable means of systematically examining the requirements placed on vocational training in various economic sectors and at the level of the business enterprise and it implies the establishment of systems of continuous monitoring and assessment. There is however also a broad consensus that certification alone is insufficient as the sole instrument of quality development and control.

The introduction of the WEB (Adult and Vocational Act) in 1996 provided *the Netherlands* with a significant legislative impetus towards increasing quality. As described in more detail in the ROC OverGelder case study, the WEB requires vocational training centres to implement quality management for the achievement of goals such as greater efficiency, more emphasis on demands of the labour market and needs of the participants, etc. In addition, the Education Inspectorate publishes a national annual report on the quality of education. Last year's report led to a discussion of the quality of the Dutch vocational training system, which focused on four aspects. The aspect of efficiency and outcome of vocational education examined the quality of vocational training, particularly drop-out rates, especially among participants with a foreign ethnic background. With regard to examination procedures the Education Inspectorate calls for the vocational training centres (ROCs) to formulate education and examination regulations. The necessity of such a procedure is admitted by all the actors involved, although there are differences of opinion regarding deadlines for realisation. At the level of ROCs, discussion on the aspect of orientation to the individual needs of participants is concerned primarily with the need to stimulate innovations and enhance the flexibility of education programmes. In this context, there are fewer fundamental objections on the part of providers than references to their limited financial and staff resources. The Education Inspectorate continues to call for qualification activities to have greater orientation to the demands and requirements of the labour market. Discussion on this question is also concerned less with its appropriateness than with the limited autonomy of the ROCs in the planning of this kind of 'market-friendly' measure.

In *Portugal* at central level some measures have been taken to assure and improve quality in training:

- a certification system for trainers;
- an accreditation system for institutions delivering training;
- local authorities and local/regional economy have representatives in the secondary schools management council (schools management system is just being changed in order to improve links with the economic world and thus facilitate employment).

A main reference for quality is, broadly speaking, certification and ISO 9000. The certification of enterprises is seen as a key issue when speaking of competitiveness. But certification of quality is also a concern for vocational schools. With their 'survival' depending very much on the level of demand, having a label of quality can be a determining factor in being selected by students and their families. Given that the issue is still under debate, only very few have actually embarked on, or are about to enter, the certification process. None have yet been certified. Discussion on quality in educational circles relates for the most part to the process of teaching and learning and broadly ignores all issues pertaining to syllabus, organisation, training of trainers, etc. Assurance of quality in training is also a major issue under discussion. Quality and quality assurance are often discussed in projects in the framework of the European programme 'Leonardo da Vinci'. When evaluation of training is discussed, the criteria for such evaluation can become a concern. However, the dominant preoccupation is still with indicators for the measurement of effectiveness.

In *Sweden,* the debate on vocational training and its improvement is mainly conducted in the context of an extensive national programme 'Kunskapslyftet' for adult education. The practical objective of the programme is to raise everyone with a low education level to a minimum of 12 years of education, and the more general objective is to investigate ways of building infrastructures for lifelong learning, a key concept in the programme. The programme thus recognizes the fact that Sweden too is experiencing a structurally determined change in the qualification requirements placed on the workforce; the key words in this context are the drop in demand for poorly-skilled workers, the increasing significance of work skills such as creativity or the ability to handle changes, as well as the necessity of greater flexibility in the structures and contents of vocational training. The quality debate in Sweden is set against the background of fundamental social problems and objectives examined in an exemplary way in the programme documents. The evaluation of vocational training not only tries to find methods to investigate the courses given, but is also concerned with social implications, the system, networking, adaptation to needs in society and the labour market, as well as with softer general objectives such as creativity – from the point of view both of the individual and of society. Central points of reference of this debate are the involvement of participants and other stake-holders, different kinds of evaluations, both qualitative and quantitative approaches, as well as the wish for useful results for developers, planners and decision-makers.

In the *United Kingdom*, six aspects of vocational training have proven to be the main issues of contention: the relevance of the training provided, confidence in the standards of training, the credibility of qualifications, the competence of teachers, flexibility and cost effectiveness and the question 'who benefits and who pays?' The issue of quality has become problematic not only because of the decline of traditional key industries and the general recognition that human resources are underskilled, but also because of acceptance of the necessity of a new culture of lifelong learning. The introduction of NVQs – standards endorsed by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications – represented an attempt to establish a nationally applicable system of vocational qualification standards. As NVQs have so far not proved popular among employees and employers alike, discussions around a unified structure of examination regulation in the United Kingdom also represent an important element in the discussion on quality. The quest for systems which both demonstrate the quality of the learning programmes and the outcomes of learning has mirrored the debate outlined above. Industrial systems, such as BS5750 and ISO 9000, are used by some colleges, with adaptation to suit the context of learning. Such systems are popular with training organisations or sections within colleges providing unaccredited customised training. Many colleges dislike this approach seeing it as costly and largely irrelevant. Systems of total quality management are now much in evidence, underpinned by the requirements of regulatory bodies, i.e. QcA, FEFC, the Awarding Bodies, and, for customised provision, the specifications of individual clients.

To summarize, one can say that the Member States included in the study share a number of common causes and in some cases identical motives for quality improvement in vocational training. These include:

- the call by State or regional authorities for binding quality norms for publicly funded services in the vocational training sector;
- increasing scarcity of resources available to public bodies leading to considerable cost pressure on vocational training institutions;

- growing quality demands placed on vocational training providers due to increased competition among providers, and
- the necessity for new strategies for the qualification of human resources in the face of the challenges presented by structural changes in the economy.

The debates on questions of quality are also characterized by national specificities which are rooted in the particular problems of the individual vocational training systems. By way of example, one could point to the differences in premises (classrooms, etc.) and technical equipment available to the training providers in the various Member States. One could also cite the efforts being made in the United Kingdom to standardize vocational training and further training qualifications at national level, a subject which, in Germany, is only relevant in the field of vocational further training.

Irrespective of national priorities, experts' research reports agree on one fundamental question: the relationship between standardized certification (such as ISO 9000) and more 'intrinsically' oriented concepts of quality is regarded everywhere as by no means unproblematic. And whilst the problems differ in terms of detail, all Member States are confronted with the challenge posed by the fact that in the face of increasing European-wide standardization of vocational training, the ISO standards represent general, supranationally defined norms and hence are seen as a reliable orientation and guidelines.

3.2 Outline of the case studies

The following descriptions of the examined networks follow the headings defined within the common methodological guidelines for case studies. The descriptions cover the field of activity of the networks and their objectives, with emphasis on any further perspectives for networking between the actors as well as an in-depth analysis of the networks' relation to the question of quality in vocational training.

3.2.1 Germany: 'Quality – setting an example'

The area of activity covered by the German case study includes the entire area of transition from normal school education to vocational training to integration into working life. The main emphasis of the network activities carried out in the city of Cologne is on the funding of disadvantaged young people. Preventative and reintegrative measures for groups of people at risk of social exclusion, such as premature school leavers and young people without apprenticeships or training places, were developed in various districts of the city. The district forms the strategic focus of the measure and is described in relation to the actors as an 'area of good will'.[8] Good will was seen as one of the preconditions for cooperation between the actors at the beginning of the networking process. The decisive hurdle in the path towards improving quality of their work has been taken once the actors recognize a common interest in the resolution of the identified problems which transcends their own individual concerns. Starting from a single city borough, many districts now have their own networks of local actors whose aim it is to achieve a qualitative improvement in local education and training practice. The district networks are themselves linked to form a city-wide network with its own, overall perspective of achieving improvements in vocational training.

---

[8] R. Biber et al. (1997) Stadtteilanalyse als Grundlage eingriffsorientierter Bildungspolitik. Innovationsdistrikte Köln/Leipzig, Köln, p. 4.

Current achievements and perspectives

After more than five years the city-wide network of vocational training policy actors has become institutionally established. Its central task is to coordinate and improve the city's existing education and vocational training opportunities. In the field of dual vocational training in particular, the 'Cologne innovation district' has been able to overcome previous structural weaknesses and, by facilitating cooperation between schools, training providers, chambers of commerce and businesses, to provide a large number of disadvantaged young people with training places.

Relation to the question of quality

The approach followed by the Cologne network aims to unite local institutions of general education and vocational training, social welfare and the local economy in order to achieve common successes in the struggle against unemployment and lack of perspective amongst teenagers and young adults. The development of quality takes place first of all in a purely quantitative dimension, i.e. in relation to the provision of additional training places for people from disadvantaged sectors of society. However, as the network activities progress other aspects are implicitly added, such as the improved application of local resources and enhanced quality of training opportunities. In terms of concrete objectives the network has set itself the following, measurable, common quality indicators:

- reduction of the number of premature school leavers in a district to a minimum (down to zero in three years);
- provision of a training place to all school leavers (increase in the number of trainees by 20%);
- a measurable reduction in drop-out rates in the dual training system.

In order to achieve these goals, work is currently being carried out on the development of quality management systems. To this end, institutions participating in the network are formulating their own objectives which are to be continually checked by means of self-evaluation instruments jointly designed by cooperation partners. These instruments are currently at the test stage.

3.2.2 Ireland: 'The integrated area partnership'

The Irish case study examined a network known as 'Springboard' – a bilateral partnership to provide support for vocational training and working experience for young people from Belfast and Dublin. The creation of the partnership in 1992 can be traced back to a programme of the International Fund for Ireland (IfI) called 'Wider horizons'. The programme aims to prevent the social exclusion of disadvantaged young people and to provide them with better regular education and vocational training. This is realised via joint training activities and exchanges between participants from Northern Ireland and the

Republic of Ireland. By promoting mutual understanding and acceptance, the network also hopes to make a contribution towards a lasting peace in Ireland.

Current achievements and perspectives

Since its inception, Springboard has been able to boast continually growing numbers of participants. Initially, the network had to weather some conflicts between independent vocational training providers and the State regulatory bodies concerning questions of quality control. The partnership was initiated by the State bodies responsible for quality control. Tensions arose because it was difficult to reduce the level of State control, in spite of the fact that the network had developed its own quality control mechanisms over time.

In 1996, an evaluation was conducted into the results being obtained from the training programmes provided by the network. The main focus of this evaluation was on the success being experienced in employment and in reconciliation by participants in these programmes. It was found that 84% of those who got work considered they were helped in doing so by the programme, while 79% either loved or liked their job. Reconciliation was measured by the proportion of participants who, following completion of their training programme, made contact with other participants of a different culture. It was found that three-quarters of participants met this requirement within Northern Ireland, while 62% made cross-cultural contact between Northern and Southern Ireland. About 90% of participants considered they got some help from their training programme in understanding the different traditions. The evaluation also found that more than 90% of all participants claimed some improvement in personal characteristics such as self-confidence, team work, tolerance and general change.

Relation to the question of quality

Nowadays, the quality of training measures is controlled independently by the network. Evaluations are carried out continuously, making use of the following indicators as criteria for the assessment of training measure quality:

- the number of participants completing the measure;
- the number and type of vocational qualifications attained by the participants;
- participants' progress in the field of social skills (self-confidence, team work, etc.);
- the whereabouts of the participants subsequent to completion of the measure (level of integration into employment);
- the quality of employment and the degree of job satisfaction;
- the extent of mutual understanding and cultural tolerance.

This set of indicators is remarkable in that the quality of the training is measured not only by means of the 'hard factors' normally found in the evaluation of vocational training measures, such as whereabouts and qualifications, but also in terms of 'soft indicators', such as self confidence, tolerance and mutual understanding. Although such indicators are difficult to register and even more difficult to quantify, they nevertheless still represent an essential quality characteristic, due to the fact that they form one of the network's central objectives.

3.2.3 Italy: ‘Cooperation and the culture of quality’

The network examined by the Italian case study was created on the initiative of the Emilia Romagna region. The decisive factor in its creation was the passing of a national law which stipulated that every Italian region had to establish a system of quality assurance for the vocational training sector by the year 1999. These systems are firstly intended to guarantee that vocational training institutions fulfill certain standards; from 1999, public money will only be made available to providers of vocational training which are certified according to EN ISO 9000 or which can demonstrate an alternative accreditation. Secondly, this is intended to help create greater uniformity in the vocational training sector and to facilitate greater comparability between providers. These intentions should be seen against the background of the traditional heterogeneity of Italy's vocational training system which is composed of two independent organisational axes – a central State vocational training system and the various vocational training systems of the individual regions. With the cooperation of the relevant actors, it is intended that binding vocational training standards should be defined for both systems and that these should be coordinated with each other.

Current achievements and perspectives

The network established in Emilia Romagna is currently working together with vocational training policy actors to define a system of accreditation and certification for the vocational training and further training sector. In order to achieve this objective, vocational training institutions in the region have staged joint seminars which have formed the basis for cooperative research and development activities. Together, the actors involved are attempting to apply the ISO standards to the field of vocational and further training and to install a regional quality assurance system. The region has also provided additional financial resources to help complete the task. The network is taking on a model function for the whole of Italy, since once elaborated, the standards are then to be transferred to other regions, together with the experience made with the quality assurance system.

Relation to the question of quality

The network of regional training institutions created in Emilia Romagna serves to concentrate the experiences of different actors to create a common and model system of effective quality assurance. The specificity of this network consists not only of its model and developmental function for the rest of the country. A further characteristic can be identified: the development of quality standards is taking place in a process organized by the regional actors themselves, and which includes the smaller providers. The regional network approach is designed precisely to enable these smaller providers of vocational training to become involved in a quality assurance system tailored to their particular requirements.

The main activities of the network have so far been concerned with the definition and research work needed to adapt the ISO quality criteria to vocational training as well as with the development of further standards beyond the ISO norms. This work is still in progress and there has not yet been any practical experience with the functioning of the system. However, it already looks as if the joint work carried out by the actors involved in the network has done much to increase awareness and sharpen sensitivity regarding the importance of questions of quality.

3.2.4 The Netherlands I: 'Quality management: a process of quality control'

The ROC OverGelder, which was the subject of a case study, is one of 46 learning centres in the Netherlands. It is an association of VET providers offering vocational education and training in four sectors: techniques, economy, care/services and education programmes for poorly educated young people. An important area of activity for the ROC is the establishment of a quality management system.

Both the structure of the ROC and the activities examined in the study have their origins in a national law, the 'Adult and Vocational Act' (WEB). This law brought about a restructuring of the system of vocational education in the Netherlands by requiring regional VET providers to form ROCs and obliging these to write regular reports on quality management. VET provider networks of this kind have been created in all regions of the Netherlands. Their aim is to create joint responsibility for the orientation of the vocational training system to the needs of individuals and the market, as well as establishing a functional system of quality control.

Current achievements and perspectives

As a first result of the WEB, VET providers who once worked separately are now unified in one regional vocational training system. They share the same board and have to develop a single policy on finance, training programmes, staff management, infrastructure and quality management. The envisaged quality management instruments will consist of the permanent monitoring of training processes in the individual sectors; in addition, more attention will be paid to the demands of business enterprises in the region and a concept for external quality control will also be put into practice.

Relation to the question of quality

The improvement in the quality of regional vocational training has been one of the explicit objectives of the ROC network since its earliest beginnings. The current system of quality management is oriented towards 11 areas which are continually checked and developed further. The areas currently serve as points of reference for self-evaluation of the sectors as discussed below.[9] The yearly quality management cycle is made up of four stages:

- self-evaluation: faculty management carry out an annual self-evaluation based on the 11 quality areas;
- priority setting: the self-evaluation provides a basis for a written timetable of suggestions for improvements for the following year;
- improvements: the suggestions for improvements in the work of the faculties which were formulated during the priority setting phase are put into practice over the course of the year;

---

[9] The 11 areas were described as: 1. Policy development; 2. Quality management; 3. Finance; 4. Personnel; 5. Communication; 6. Infrastructure and resources; 7. Programme availability; 8. Influx; 9. Transfer; 10. Outflow; 11. Education and training.

- 'intervisitatie':[10] an 'intervisitatie' committee composed of sector managers, the two overall quality managers and members of the board, decide on overall quality improvement measures for the ROC based on the faculty evaluations.

Two quality coordinators act as continual managers for changes to be made. For all actors within the ROC they are the contact persons in matters of quality management. Quality management is the formal institutional responsibility of a steering group which also includes the sector managers. The steering group is therefore responsible for the quality coordinators.

3.2.5 The Netherlands II: 'Target group integration via concentration of resources'

The subject of this second case study from the Netherlands was a network in the Midden-West-Brabant region, sponsored by the regional vocational training centre (ROC), the town of Tilburg and the regional employment office. The members of the network jointly developed the 'Praktikerleerbedrijf' (PLB), a new set of opportunities for the vocational integration of unemployed people between the ages of 16 and 50. The concept is based on the recognition of the fact that the region possesses not only a high level of unemployment but also an unsatisfied demand for qualified labour.

The network was created following an initiative by the local employment office and the town of Tilburg. This initiative can indirectly also be seen as the result of a law transferring responsibility for general education, vocational training and the integration of target groups to the local council level. The PLB was intended as a vocational training and further training network, enabling a concentration of all available resources for the vocational promotion of unemployed people. An overall regional concept of 'tailor-made counselling, qualification and monitoring' was designed to help the unemployed to start a course of vocational training or facilitate integration into employment. The network was set up not least because there seemed to be no way to ensure the realisation of this concept by an individual institution.

Current achievements and perspectives

The PLB has established itself as a regional network in which all the vocational training institutions of the area make their specific resources and know-how available and subject to joint coordination. In future it is intended that cooperation in the VET provider network will not just be limited to the integration of the unemployed but should also be 'multifunctional'. The structures developed by the network will then also be used for further training and to improve coordination between general school education and vocational training.

Relation to the question of quality

The quality of the regional vocational training is discussed from a number of perspectives in the PLB network. From an organisational point of view it is a question of concentrating the resources available on the actors and offering qualifications which are as closely tailored to the requirements of the market as possible. In addition, the individual 'fit' of the measures is to be increased by means of participant-specific emphasis. Further planning will be based on an envisaged interim evaluation of network activities to date. At present, management of the PLB is in the hands of a steering group which is responsible for controlling the network and which has introduced reliable communication and feedback structures.

---

[10] Intervisitatie (Dutch) means being examined by collegues or peers. In the quality management of ROC OverGelder it functions as an internal quality control.

3.2.6 Portugal: 'Quality through networking in a vocational school'

The network examined in the Portuguese case study functions in an economically underdeveloped world. The core of the network is a vocational school which was set up through a contract between national authorities, the Ministry of Education and a regional development agency, the promoter of the school. The agency had just developed a EU funded project in the framework of the Petra programme, whose results were: a training curriculum and job profile, a syllabus and training materials in the area of food quality control.

At a second stage, universities and business organisations were involved in the courses development. The universities cooperated in the training of trainers (modular structures of courses) and local industry supported the practical training and work experience.

Current achievements and perspectives

Once established as an institution, the vocational school itself became the central actor in the network which integrates public bodies (the regional bodies of the Ministry of Education and of the Ministry of Planification), local business enterprises, employers' associations, local authorities and the university.

The main aim of the network is regional development. The school is supposed to 'produce' qualified youngsters, according to the concept of 'sustained development'. Thus, there is a shared analysis of qualifications needs; the contents and methods of training are influenced by the local economy and by research done at the university. On the other hand, the supply of training also influences new economical activities, for instance in agro/rural tourism and social animators. In fact, the network tries to establish strong links between training, employability and employment.

Relation to the question of quality

The Portuguese network is primarily directed towards the relationship between training, employment and regional development. Although no system of quality management has yet been installed, individual instruments are used which can be seen as part of a 'quality strategy'; these include:

- improvement of training methodologies through cooperation with the university;
- improvement of the quality of vocational training via cooperation with local business enterprises;
- registering the destination of participants subsequent to completion of the course (integration into employment);

- examining the quality of tuition via guidelines for self-evaluation of the trainers as well as via participants' surveys;
- levels of satisfaction.

Continuous coordination of training opportunities and qualification requirements of local business can also be seen as an additional inherent quality aspect in the network.

3.2.7 Sweden: 'Schools and enterprises sharing their resources jointly'

The Swedish case study examined a technology and skills centre (TEK) which was initiated in 1996 by firms based in the region and set up in cooperation with the local vocational training college. In addition, the local administration also participates in the network. The initiative to found the TEK network came from business enterprises which were dissatisfied with the qualifications of participants from State-run training measures who were often not familiar with modern machinery and techniques. On the other hand, training measures offered by the companies were also unpopular among young people, resulting in considerable recruitment problems for firms.

The network's objective was to overcome mutual isolation and parallel existence of the vocational training courses offered by schools and companies, and to motivate the relevant actors to enter into cooperation with each other. The intention was for all those involved to profit from the concentration of resources: the schools received new technical equipment (such as a computer room) and the companies were able to make use of the training courses offered by the schools. Within the framework of the TEK, further training opportunities are now being developed which are adapted to the requirements of local enterprises and measures are being carried out in cooperation with the local vocational college making use of its staff and technical resources.

Current achievements and perspectives

The network activities carried out so far have already led to considerable qualitative improvements in vocational training. Numerous firms have demonstrated their interest in joining the TEK which clearly shows that the network addresses genuine needs. The success of the model means that it will also be transferred and adapted to other regions of Sweden. The TEK network studied in this report, is itself a national transfer adapted to local conditions, of a similar network co-operation developed in a neighbouring Swedish region.

Relation to the question of quality

The TEK does not, as yet, carry out any form of systematic quality management. Two instruments have so far been used to check quality. A survey is carried out among participants on completion of the course to monitor their satisfaction with the training. The TEK also undertakes a twice-yearly survey of company qualification requirements and adapts its training measures accordingly. In addition, companies are also offered advice regarding improvements to their qualificational structures. It is intended that these elements should provide the basis for a formal quality management system in the future.

3.2.8 United Kingdom: 'the university for industry'

The case study from the United Kingdom examines a network of providers set up to implement a prototype for the 'university for industry (UFI) in the North East region of England. The aims of the UFI are to increase the demand for learning by individuals and employers, particularly SMEs, secure easier access to learning opportunities and to modernise the supply of education and training. The concept for the UFI was developed by the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR), a political think tank and pressure group. The UFI North East pilot was set up by the IPPR and the University of Sunderland with a core of key players from the region's training providers which formed the network of organisations concerned with implementing the UFI.

The UFI network was set up as a result of the observation that the massive economic transformation in the North East pilot region meant that the area had an above average requirement for adaptive training measures and yet still had the lowest level of vocational further training activities in the entire United Kingdom. However, it was not a lack of training opportunities which was diagnosed as the central problem, but the lack of transparency and hence the poor accessibility of the training measures. With its central concern of optimizing access to vocational training, the installed network sees itself primarily as an education broker.

Current achievements and perspectives

Over 5 000 learners registered with UFI learning centres in the first nine months of its existence. A broad range of actors have so far joined the UFI network. The UFI now comprises 35 'learning centres',[11] eight of which form the responsible core group; in addition, there are also many employers from local firms and local branches of national and international companies (i.e. BBC, Nissan, British Telecom). Institutions such as the University of Sunderland and the Further Education Funding Council are also involved in the network. The UFI has also set up a one-stop-shop and a call centre to help interested callers find the courses suited to them.

Relation to the question of quality

The principal area of development in quality assurance has been in assessing and improving customer satisfaction. Follow-up calls are made to all enquirers, in addition to the systematic follow up calls to ex-participants to promote their progression to further learning opportunities. The call centre also registers performance indicators regarding speed of response and conversions from enquiry to registration. The UFI consciously limited its indicators on quality control to these categories, since the training institutions involved are already regulated in terms of quality of their provision by public accountable bodies.

---

[11] These centres may be within existing organisations, such as colleges and universities, as well as libraries, football stadiums and shopping centres.

3.3 Summary of the most important results of the case studies

The above documentation and analysis of the examined networks clearly show that in all eight cases the creation of a network does not represent an end 'in itself'. Initiated cooperation was always based on specific problems in the vocational training system, and in all cases the networks developed approaches to solving these problems:

- In Germany for example, a major concern was to reduce the high 'drop-out rate' among young people in the systems of general and vocational education.
- In Ireland, the network was directed towards using vocational training programmes to reduce the risk of social exclusion faced by young people, as well as to diminish the political and cultural tensions within Northern Ireland and between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
- In Italy, the aim of the network was to create greater uniformity between the vocational training systems of the regions and that of the central State, as well as increasing comparability via the development of quality indicators.
- In the Netherlands, the networks were concerned with the implementation of a regional quality management system and with helping a number of training institutions to provide individualized paths to vocational training for disadvantaged target groups.
- In Portugal, a vocational school provided fundamental structures for an effective vocational training in an economically underdeveloped region and designed a strategy between training and employment. It also established links between the production of qualifications and the requirements of the regional economy.
- The case study from Sweden showed how to overcome the isolated parallel existence of vocational training courses in schools and firms which had led to considerable disparities between the qualificational profiles of the labour force and the requirements of the firms;
- In the United Kingdom, the lack of transparency and poor accessibility of the training opportunities provided the impetus for the creation of a broker body to help match supply and demand and a network of training providers able to respond rapidly to the needs of individuals and employers.

In all cases, it was not only social problems and specific inadequacies in the vocational training systems which caused the networks to be created. In addition, the problems providing the impetus for the setting up of a network were characteristically ones which could not be solved by the individual vocational training institutions on their own. Whilst the individual institutions are affected by these problems, the solution lies way beyond their direct sphere of influence. The problems located at the start of the network activities can only be dealt with by several vocational training actors cooperating together. Cooperation in networks increases the actors' room for manoeuvre, creating new possibilities for the solution of existing problems. Networks extend the problem-solving capabilities of the actors in them.

It is therefore hardly surprising that all the networks which were studied have produced consistently impressive results in as far as they have overcome existing inadequacies and improved the functioning of their vocational training systems. However, this is only partially due to systematic quality management. The developments realised by the networks in our case studies therefore require a broad definition of quality. Only two of the networks examined concern themselves with quality in a narrower sense. The Italian case study and one of the Dutch networks are alone in being explicitly oriented towards defining quality standards and implementing regional systems of quality assurance. Otherwise, network activities are directed towards changing the structural context in which vocational training takes place, and it is these changes in the frame conditions which bring about improvements in the quality of the vocational training measures available. This is most conspicuous when the networks are primarily concerned with coordinating training opportunities with the qualificational requirements of local firms, as in the Swedish and Portuguese examples. In both cases, the usefulness of the vocational qualifications and the quality of the vocational training system have been improved considerably.

The disparity in quality objectives of the networks is matched by the differences in the use of instruments and indicators to check training quality. The networks from Italy and the Netherlands which were both oriented explicitly to the concept of quality are developing or already have at their disposal a relatively differentiated range of instruments and a varied set of indicators. These indicators are characterized by the fact that they were developed jointly by a network of local actors and then applied (in comparable form) to the level of the individual institutions. Quality indicators relating to inter-institutional network activities were not envisaged in these cases or are not required. The situation is quite different for those networks which aim to achieve improvements in quality via changes in the context of vocational training. Their quality criteria can only be realised via the joint activity of network actors. To take the Cologne network as an example: the rate of premature school leavers cannot be reduced to zero by an individual institution, but only by the coordinated efforts of all network actors. The existence of this kind of inter-institutional indicators imparts a measurable quality dimension to the cooperation between network actors. These indicators represent a binding orientation for the network as a whole, and can also serve later as criteria for the assessment of results achieved.

This connection between network activities and quality development, dealt with only superficially so far, will be analysed in greater detail and depth in the following chapter.

4. Quality through networking – an analysis of the case studies

The eight case studies in the previous chapter served to demonstrate the differences in objectives pursued via the initiation of networking activities. In all cases the networks took as their starting points specific shortcomings and failings in the vocational training system, particularly those at the interfaces between the actors involved in the training process. The creation of networks enabled the actors to extend their activities beyond their direct spheres of influence. The networks proved themselves to be the key to the solution of structural problems in the vocational training system.

The case studies provided striking evidence that, compared to the possibilities for action open to individual actors, networks offer considerably enhanced problem-solving capacities to the actors involved. At first glance, however, there seems to be less clarity concerning the networks' relation to quality, something which has to do with the different objectives of the various networks. For the quality dimension differs according to the networks' concrete objectives. Furthermore, the interests of the actors involved in the networks are not identical, in spite of their common goals, so they tend to have their own specific and individual ideas about quality and the methods required to achieve it.

In this chapter we analyse the relation between the development of quality and networks in greater detail. To this end, we first examine the question of who are the most important network actors, what interests and requirements these actors bring to the networking process and how their different interests affect the quality dimension.

4.1 Networking actors and their functions

We are concerned with clarifying which actors initiated the networks and also with the central and more interesting question of who takes on the organisation of the processes of change in the network and how they do so, and hence who acts as a driving force in the network.

4.1.1 Founding actors

The most important network initiators include the providers of vocational training measures, business enterprises and State institutions, with a central role undoubtedly accorded to actors from the latter. Whilst the actual role of the State actors in the examined networks varies, they nevertheless play a constitutive role in as far as the networks are always a matter of public-private partnerships.

The power of the State actors consists of their being able to define and change the objectives and frame conditions under which vocational training takes place. In Italy and the Netherlands, new laws regulating the reform of vocational training formed the starting point for network activities. In the Netherlands, the law even stipulated that regional providers should form networks to create vocational training centres and that quality management should be introduced, whilst in Italy the law merely provided incentives for

37

cooperation between regional vocational training institutions in the field of quality management.

In the German and Irish networks, public bodies exercise overall control and fulfill orientational functions. As providers of vocational training measures they constitute the central actors in both cases. The situation in Italy, Portugal and even in Sweden is a similar one, where vocational schools occupy an important position in the network due to the fact that they have practically been commissioned by the State to exercise responsibility for the contents and structures of vocational training.

In addition to vocational schools, private vocational training institutions are also involved in the networks examined. These include non-profitmaking, religious and private providers, as well as business and trade union organisations. Their courses are financed either by public subsidy or by the fees of their customers, i.e. the course participants or business enterprises. The competition among providers, their dependence on public funding and private customers, makes them particularly receptive for questions of quality development. For this reason, it is often precisely these actors who are the driving force behind network activities in the field of quality management. Whilst the State bodies set the frame conditions for new developments, it is essentially these actors who seek new, more flexible ways of creatively overcoming the deficits in vocational training systems which have been acknowledged by all.

In the Swedish case study, it was the business enterprises which acted as the 'locus of power' as well as the decisive factor in the initiation of the network. Although the TEK was created in cooperation with the State-run vocational college, the main focus was clearly on the realisation of business interests. It was not possible for the State institution to ignore the firms' interest in training with a greater orientation to practical requirements, especially since in-depth cooperation between the economy and vocational training institutions is gaining in significance throughout Europe. Nowhere, however, is the influence of business enterprises as great as in the Swedish network, something which can be attributed to the key role played by these enterprises in the founding of the network.

Elsewhere, the role of the business community is often limited to the investigation of regional requirements for future qualifications and to ensuring that these requirements are included in regional vocational training planning. This can be clearly illustrated in the Portuguese network. In the German network, efforts are made by both firms and vocational colleges in the framework of the dual system to improve cooperation in didactic matters.

Our analysis has so far described the most important network actors together with the functions they fulfill. In general, the network initiators occupy a powerful position because their interests naturally tend to form the central focus of activity. The relations between the network actors is of central importance for the dynamics of the network; these relations can be characterized as public-private partnerships. This also represents an important interim result. For it is precisely this network-inherent, specific form of cooperation between public and private actors which explains the high level of structural problem-solving capacity. As private-public partnerships the networks unite the advantages in action of two opposing actors, with the formative power of the networks being based on the involvement of State institutions, whilst the dynamism of the process is provided by the flexibility of the private actors. Whereas the State bodies have the power to change the structural frame conditions and control the levers of the financial resources, the vocational training providers have the professional expertise, human resources and the power of experience with which to improve the quality of vocational training.

4.1.2 Key actors and managers of change

Whilst we have so far analysed the role and function of the actors involved in the networks, the following section is concerned with the management and steering structures which have become established in the course of network activities.

Institutions or persons that by virtue of their formal position contribute decisively to the maintainance or further development of a network are referred to here as key actors. They take on – as in the German network in the city of Cologne – official management functions, provide additional financial resources for the enactment of network activities and also bear responsibility for achievement of the network objectives.

In delimitation to the former, the manager of change is the person or group responsible for organising the networking process, agreeing upon objectives and ways of networking with the actors, disseminating new proposals, taking the initiative, coordinating network activities and attempting to overcome conflicts of interests by integrating the diverging ideas of the network actors. In the Italian network, key actors are nominated by regional authorities, whilst the role of manager of change is played by a steering group made up of the most important vocational training institutions. In Ireland, the Board of Springboard functions as the key actor and the management team as the manager of change. In the United Kingdom a core group has been formed from the actors involved in the network and it is this core group which has taken on a key function in the steering of the network. The Dutch ROC OverGelder has an even more differentiated steering structure. Here too, the management of the network is in the hands of a steering group, and this is supplemented by two coordinators who, as specific managers of change, are responsible for questions of quality.

On balance one can say that in addition to the key actors who are responsible for the formal direction of the network, the networking process also requires specific steering activities. In view of the complex tasks associated with steering and coordinating network actors, particular demands are made of the abilities of the managers of change. It is by no means sufficient for the managers to be merely well-versed in technical questions of the network, they must also have the social and interpersonal skills necessary to be able to guide the network process. They must be able to steer the process and to provide instructions in order for specific objectives to be achieved. They must equally be prepared to compromise and balance the different interests of the various network actors. To this extent the steering of networks requires a quite specific and new type of qualificational profile from the managers of change. We shall examine specific aspects of this profile on the basis of concrete examples from the networks later on.

4.1.3 Top-down versus bottom-up?

Analysis of the roles and functions of the actors involved in the networks has already made clear that cooperation between public and private actors represents one of the strengths of the networks (cf. section 4.1.1), because the actors' specific competences supplement each other in a positive manner. In the following section we intend to examine these forms of cooperation in greater detail, paying particular attention to the question of the relation of top-down and bottom-up networking approaches to each other.

As already described in a number of the cases examined, such as those in Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands, the initiative for the creation of the networks originated with State actors, whilst the practical implementation of the State directives was undertaken by local actors. To this extent it seems justifiable to speak of top-down approaches which are supplemented by bottom-up activities. To be more precise, in the Italian example the State initiative has merely set a new objective for the traditionally established cooperation between vocational training providers of the Emilia Romagna, an objective which consists of the development of a quality management system. This means that in this case the top-down initiative is based on a pre-existing bottom-up structure.

The Swedish network by contrast is the most likely candidate for the title of classic bottom-up-oriented approach, since in this case the initiative emanated from local business enterprises which came together as a result of the training problems existing in their field of activity. These actors then jointly approached the State-run vocational college in order to promote awareness for the qualificational needs of the business community. In this case the bottom-up action triggered off a complementary top-down reaction, with the result that the TEK – a new service provider for the entire region – was created from the collaboration between private and public initiatives.

In the example from the United Kingdom, a broad interplay between top-down and bottom-up impulses can also be observed. Originally the activities for the development of a regional broker agency to match supply and demand in the field of vocational training stemmed from a scientific research institution, the IPPR, and the University of Sunderland. This idea was transformed into a bottom-up initiative following a joint meeting with the local vocational training actors and the relevant declarations of intent. These meetings took place soon after the May elections which resulted in the return of a Labour Government which in turn converted the manifesto commitment to a UFI into a Government policy. In this case study the bottom-up approach is complemented by a top-down initiative which imparts fresh impulses to local activities by providing resources for the practical implementation of the network activities.

A similarly interesting development took place, albeit under some different conditions, in Portugal, where top-down and bottom-up approaches met. The legal framework for vocational schools, as described by the Ministry of Education at the time was 'the corollary of an intensive social dialogue undertaken long before the production of legislation. This methodology allowed time and opportunity to break down the barriers of mutual suspicion, perhaps even resentment, between central government, local authorities and the business community'.[12]

The vocational school, under these guidelines, is a facilitator for dialogue between the central State structures and the local and regional social actors and thus being able of organizing bottom up and top-down oriented interests.

We recognize that in none of the cases was a pure version of a top-down or bottom-up approach put into practice; in all cases there was rather a mutually complementary interplay between the two approaches. The already documented research results on the significance of public-private partnerships have thus gained in credence and depth: irrespective of differences in function, successful networking requires dialogue and cooperation based on the equality of all the actors involved.

4.2 Networking and the question of quality

The analysis in the previous section clearly showed networks in the case studies are striving to improve the quality of the system of vocational training and that this is being achieved via the equal cooperation of all relevant actors in the regional context, cooperation which has to be organised by managers of change who are competent in this field. In the following section, we shall examine which quality objectives and dimensions are of primary importance for the networks and actors in our case studies.

4.2.1 Approaches to a definition of quality

Our analyses have so far shown that network actors contribute different perspectives to the question of quality for joint work, so that networks pursue a broad spectrum of quality objectives. Furthermore, it has also become evident (cf. section 3.3.) that the joint definition of overall quality objectives, which provide a binding orientation for the network as a whole as well as for all the individual participating actors, represents a decisive developmental step. The previous section demonstrated that this step also entails communication between the actors regarding the achievement and monitoring of the common quality objectives. It is this process of development of common quality objectives and modalities for their management which also turns a network into a systematic structure from the point of view of quality.

The development of an understanding of quality in a common discourse between actors can be demonstrated particularly well by referring to the Italian case study and the Dutch ROC OverGelder network. In the Netherlands, the law on the restructuring of vocational training (WEB) stipulated four quality dimensions covering the following points:

- the final and partial qualifications to be achieved by participants;
- accessibility for participants and special target groups such as ethnic minorities;
- intake, allocation and coaching of participants;
- advice for education support and career counselling.

---

[12] Case study on networking of a vocational school in Portugal by Emilia Andrade.

Although the actors in the ROC OverGelder network took these quality characteristics as the starting point for their joint work, as their cooperation progressed they found them to be inadequate. As a result, the network actors defined their own supplementary quality characteristics. 'Quality should also relate to the development of policies on finance, management of staff, communication, infrastructure and resources, availability of programmes ... In total, ROC OverGelder has chosen a quality management system that covers 11 areas'.[13]

Table 1: Quality aspects of vocational training from the perspective of individual groups of actors

	Public funding provider	Training provider	Business client	Participant
Quality of structure:	• appropriate security and guarantees • reliability of process • financial controlling • accounting systems	• questions of allocation, contact to customers • adequate financial basis • integrated range of courses • system of recognition of qualificational requirements	• cost-benefit aspect • personnel management • compatibility with production • registration of requirements	• course can be easily reached by public transport • cost-benefit aspect • accessibility
Quality of process:	• appropriateness of trainers and project managers • appropriateness of the "intrinsic" quality of the projects • observance of previously formulated regulations	• appropriateness of trainers and project managers • controlling of training • self-evaluation • training pact with the participants • qualified training staff	• participant-oriented, goal-oriented and flexible projects • orientation to practice, coordination with the timing of production planning "that doesn't hurt" • trust and faith in the training	• qualified teaching • participant-oriented timetables • practical orientation • motivation
Quality of outcome:	• proof of requirement • degree of objective achievement • efficiency • evaluation	• high success rate • participant satisfaction • low drop-out rate	• satisfaction • qualification matches specific demands • usefulness	• satisfaction • usefulness of the training • career opportunities • trust • mutual understanding

The differences in understanding with regard to quality are even more evident in the Italian case study which is concerned with the transposition of the ISO 9000 norms to the field of vocational training. In the course of this transposition process the actors identified three fundamental perspectives on quality: the public funding provider, the training provider and the business enterprise. In the overview above, we have also supplied a fourth perspective, namely that of the participants in vocational training measures. The overview only mentions the internal actors and excludes external actors such as political institutions.

In accordance with our theoretical concept for the investigation of quality (cf. section 2.1.2) we have differentiated between three dimensions of quality. The term quality of structure refers to the frame conditions within which the vocational training measures take place;

---

[13] Cf. case study the Netherlands by Ads Koster.

the term quality of process covers the practical enactment of training and further training measures; the term quality of outcome refers to the contents and objectives of vocational training.

As the table explains with concrete examples, quite different aspects of quality are relevant for the perspectives of the various actors in each of the quality dimensions.

Aspects of quality of structure

With regard to structural quality criteria, public funding providers are primarily interested in financial and administrative questions, with a high value placed on effective financial control and reliable administrative procedures. The training providers associate quite different characteristics with structure quality, which for them is primarily dependent on available funding and a functioning recognition system for (future) qualification requirements. In this latter respect, the interests of training providers converge with those of the business clients, whilst for (potential) participants the question of accessibility to the measures is of prime importance.

Aspects of quality of process

The process aspects which are relevant for the public funding provider include the reliability of the training provider with regard to technical enactment of training measures and, depending on the measures, relations between participants and trainers. For training providers in contrast, the process quality is primarily dependent on the professional and didactic qualifications of training personnel, and this is also a fundamental quality criterion for participants. Businesses regard close coordination of training measures with their own requirements as important, and this aspect affects both the contents of training as well as the temporal organisation of the measures. In addition, both types of clients, i.e. businesses and participants, see a close orientation to practice as a central criterion of process quality.

Aspects of quality of outcome

From the point of view of outcome, the most important thing for the public funding providers as well as for the business clients is the cost-benefit relation and the economic efficiency of the training measures. The training providers measure result quality primarily against the success rates of the participants, i.e. the number and type of qualifications achieved by participants. For the business clients these criteria are secondary; they measure result quality in terms of the usefulness of acquired qualifications for their firms. In contrast, participants are interested in both the acquisition of formal qualifications as well as their practical usefulness.

If we take the different perspectives of the actors into account – as we have done above – we see that the quality of vocational training measures comprises a wide range of structure-, process- and result-oriented characteristics.

The strength of networks consists of their capacity to integrate these various points of view and criteria into a comprehensive quality concept. Hence the breadth of the term quality, which we noted earlier (cf. section 3.3) is by no means a sign of diffuseness. On the contrary, the diversity within the concept of quality on which the networks are based represents a fundamental understanding of the term. The networks thus elaborate and systematise the dimensions of quality which are of decisive importance for vocational training practice. This means that the concept of quality as represented in the networks is characterised not only by diversity and complexity but also by the inestimable advantage of bringing into focus those aspects of quality which are essential for vocational training.

4.2.2 Application of quality norms versus the development of intrinsic quality standards?

Although there is a general interest in improving quality of the vocational training system, as we have seen in the previous section, the different interests of the actors lead them to quite different perceptions of the central quality criteria. This is also reflected in the differing objectives of networks in the case studies. Whilst the Italian network is attempting to adapt a formalised system of quality norms to its own ends, the other networks seem at first glance to be following a different path. They are oriented to their own jointly-formulated objectives from which they deduce the most important quality dimensions inherent in their situation.

The implementation of quality norms in vocational training institutions is – as the quality criteria of the other networks have shown – certainly insufficient as a concept for the improvement of quality in the vocational training system. However, the use of quality stamps and certificates which guarantee adherence to specific quality norms at institutional level does represent an important and necessary element in the improvement of quality in vocational training. None of the networks can claim to possess an adequate concept of quality. Quality cannot be defined statically: our understanding of this concept must be continually renewed, in keeping with the changes in society as a whole.

The Italian case study also demonstrates that the use of ISO-norms in the field of vocational training is not merely a simple process of schematic transposition. Instead, it requires complex transformation procedures which also take the structure of the (regional) training system and the individual situations of the actors into account. Hence the certification approach pursued by this network also requires active participation of network actors in defining quality norms. In as much as certification for the individual training providers takes place on the basis of individualised quality criteria which also take regional frame conditions into account, the various network paths to increased quality do not appear to be so substantially different after all. In both cases, network actors are required to discuss and agree upon central quality criteria in order to be able to reconcile opposing interests and achieve a concept of quality which is supported by all.

The Italian network, designed to promote the certification of regional training providers, is not however concerned with the deductive enactment of an abstract concept of quality for vocational training institutions. If that were so, cooperation between the regional actors would be rendered obsolete. The Italian network actors are in agreement that their network activities should consist of a joint and universally supported process of inductive elaboration of the central determining factors and characteristics of quality for the (regional) vocational training system and/or for their own institutions. Given that these characteristics are constantly changing, the emphasis is less on the current understanding of quality than on the process character of its elaboration and its continual updating.

4.3 Indicators and instruments of quality development

Below we examine the paths which networks follow in order to steer the quality development processes which they have set in motion, as well as the instruments and indicators which networks use in order to test for and control the achievement of their quality objectives.

4.3.1 Indicators of objective achievement

'An indicator can be defined as the measurement of an objective to be met, a resource mobilised, a gauge of quality or a context variable.'[14] An indicator supplies the necessary information in order to be able to assess the degree of success of specific actions. All the networks examined in the case studies have either already used indicators to measure their pursued quality objectives, or are in the process of developing them. Although the specific design of the indicators developed by the networks varies by quite a considerable degree, they nevertheless all, in keeping with the general definition, are intended to serve as criteria for the assessment of the progress made in achieving the quality objectives as defined by the network. The following table provides an overview of the indicators which were used by the networks to measure quality characteristics.

Table 2: Exemplary indicators for measurement of quality characteristics in network activities

	EU-country	Quality indicators
D	**Germany**	**quantitative:** • reduction in the rate of premature school leavers in a city district to zero; • providing all school leavers with a training place (increasing the number of trainees by 20%); • reduction in the drop-out rate in the dual training system; **qualitative**: • new funding concepts for disadvantaged target groups.
IRL	**Ireland**	**quantitative:** • the number of participants completing the measure; • number and type of qualifications achieved; • participants' destination (particularly in employment); **qualitative:** • participant success with regard to personal skills (self-confidence, teamwork, • tolerance, etc.); • quality of employment; • degree of job satisfaction; • extent of mutual understanding and cultural recognition.

---

[14] MEANS programme 1997-98 of the European Commission, DG XVI, MEANS-Collection Volume 2: Evaluating socio-economic programmes: Selection and use of indicators for monitoring and evaluation. Brussels 1998, p. 12.

	EU-country	Quality indicators
I	**Italy**	**quantitative**: • the number of participants completing the measure; • number and type of qualifications achieved; • participants' destination (particularly in employment); • drop-out rate; **qualitative:** Definition of quality indicators in the context of the following dimensions: • quality of the structural, organisational frame conditions; • quality of human resources and available skills; • project quality; • enactment quality; • management quality; • quality of the relation between customers and trainers.
NL	**The Netherlands I**	Definition of quality indicators in the context of the following dimensions: • developing policy; • quality management; • finance; • personnel; • communication; • infrastructure and resources; • the availability of programmes; • influx; • transfer; • outflow; • education and training.
NL	**The Netherlands II**	**quantitative:** • output of the regional vocational training system; **qualitative:** • individual fit of the measure via participant-specific pathways.
P	**Portugal**	**quantitative:** • selection of measure participants; • participant whereabouts. **qualitative:** • regional employment situation; • tuition quality; • easiness of getting placements.
S	**Sweden**	**quantitative:** • quantity of active network companies; • quantity of courses and participants; • employment rate of students; **qualitative:** • satisfaction of the firms; • satisfaction of the participants.
UK	**United Kingdom**	**quantitative:** • placement times; **qualitative:** • satisfaction of those placed; • consideration of individual requirements.

Leaving aside the variance and specific design of the indicators developed by the networks, we can nevertheless typify them according to the following aspects:

- Both quantitative and qualitative ('hard and soft') indicators are used. Hard indicators produce quantifiable information and hence also permit quantitative measurement; soft indicators are based on data with a descriptive character and permit qualitative assessments.
- The indicators are used to register information from both internal network sources and sources external to the network.
- In a number of networks the indicators which were used had a dual function: they served both as an objective or target figure to be reached as well as a criterion for the measurement of the degree of objective attainment.

Customer satisfaction with vocational training measures is more often defined as a quantitative indicator of quality, and to this end the Swedish and Portuguese networks both gather information from participants and business enterprises. A further priority in the use of quantitative indicators is to be found in the measurement of result and outcome variables. Thus the Irish network registers as result variables the number and type of vocational qualifications attained by participants; the evaluation of the outcome takes place using data on the whereabouts of participants subsequent to the training measure. In addition, ex-participants also provide qualitative indicators in the form of assessments of the quality of their present occupation and their degree of satisfaction with their current employment.

Besides the Irish network, the employment effects of the measures are also registered as quantitative indicators by the Portuguese and Swedish networks. These data are supplemented by qualitative assessments made by participants on the quality of tuition and – in Portugal – via surveys addressed to firms regarding the practical relevance of the primarily academically-organised vocational training. A further strength of the Portuguese approach to measurement of outcome quality is that the data on the subsequent whereabouts of participants is set in relation to qualification requirements and changes in the regional employment situation.

The Irish Springboard network clearly demonstrates that a general set of indicators is of only limited usefulness, and that quality indicators should always be defined with respect to network objectives. As discussed in Chapter 3, in addition to its vocational training objectives, this network also has explicitly political objectives: its aim is to contribute towards diffusing sectarian tensions in Ireland. In order to measure these objectives, qualitative indicators were formulated which related to the changes in the area of personal skills and personal attitudes, with interest directed mainly towards changes in capacity for team work and tolerance as well as the degree of understanding achieved between the rival religious cultures.

The case study results are very similar in the Italian network and the Dutch ROC OverGelder network, which both pursue the goal of adapting an existing set of quality indicators to their own purposes and introducing a corresponding system of quality management. Here too, experience showed that use of quality indicators does not merely mean the application of preformulated standards but also includes developmental work on the part of actors themselves in order to match the indicators either to the specific objectives and situation of actors (Italy) or to the concrete constellation in specific sectors (the Netherlands).

The quality indicators used are always oriented towards the joint objectives as defined by the network actors. As shown in the above overview, depending on their common objectives, some networks have an extensive set of indicators at their disposal. However, the number of indicators available to networks concentrating on just a few areas of activity is strictly limited. The British UFI network, for example, is active exclusively in the field of brokerage between the demands of potential participants and the regional supply of training courses. The only quantitative indicator of quality registered is the placement time, i.e. the period of time elapsed from the participant's first enquiry up to entry into one of the training courses offered by the network. Qualitative indicators are registered in the form of supplementary information on participant satisfaction with the recommended measure and the individual ‘fit’ of the measure. More extensive indicators on the evaluation of the training measure are not required for the network since individual providers have established their own criteria for the assessment of quality of their measures.

A comparatively wide-ranging set of indicators has been developed by the Dutch PLB network which coordinates vocational training activities in the Tilburg region. The indicators formulated by this network relate to organisation aspects of regional cooperation as well as to output data from the restructured vocational training system. An additional indicator also registers the individual fit of the measures, in particular for participants from disadvantaged target groups. One of the network objectives is to use cooperation between actors to reach precisely this type of participant with courses tailored to fit their individual requirements.

The network from the German case study also has a broad range of quantitative and qualitative indicators which are used to measure the attainment of network objectives. At the same time however, the network can also be seen as a model example for the way in which quantitative measurements can be used as explicit target figures for the orientation of network activities. Thus, for example, target figures for the Cologne network include the reduction of the rate of premature school leavers to zero and increasing the number of training places by 20%. As demonstrated in the case study, this type of quantitative target figure not only provides a clear orientation for network actors and helps to concentrate their activities, but also has a positive effect on the motivation of the actors. A target figure of this kind serves as both a model and an incentive.

If we examine our analysis so far of the development of indicators which can be used to measure improvements in the quality of vocational training proposed by the networks, it becomes evident that the type and number of indicators established by the networks depends primarily on the networks' objectives and areas of activity. These differing objectives and circumstances mean that each network is always required to undertake its own work on the development of appropriate quality indicators. Regarding their application, the indicators agreed upon can serve both as target figures and as measurement criteria for quality. Following an initial consolidation phase, all the networks agreed upon indicators of this kind appropriate to their requirements, in order to render measurable the quality of their work. In addition, the case studies have shown that the formulation of this kind of joint assessment criteria also entailed intensive communication between the actors on the central dimension of quality. Agreeing on common quality indicators as a result of networking is not only an expression of mutual understanding and rapprochement, for the actors involved it also implies a – sometimes painful – process of transformation and development (cf. section 4.5.1). In the course of this process, the aims of the cooperation between network actors become clearer, and individual actors necessarily have to change the internal quality criteria which they had been used to.

4.3.2 Instruments of quality management

In addition to the formulation of common quality indicators, some networks have also created the organisational basis for continual feedback from the results of quality assessment to the internal network steering structures. In the following section we examine these steering instruments.

As demonstrated in the analysis of the case studies, networks make use of four different steering approaches which tend to exist in combination with each other, rather than in discrete form. These four approaches are concerned with:

- the periodical or permanent inspection of quality via indicator-based control instruments;
- quality assurance via the central network steering body;
- the installation of quality-oriented coordination structures below the level of central network steering;
- the development and assurance of quality aspects via the individual network actors themselves.

As already indicated in the description of the categories, there is usually no clear delimitation between network steering and the task of quality management. In fact, given the general orientation of the network activities towards quality aspects, no purpose would be served by such a delimitation. The following table provides an overview of the steering and control instruments used by the networks.

Of course the instruments used by the networks are closely related to the range and specific design of the quality indicators. The participant survey instrument is used comparatively often – either by the central network steering body or by the actors themselves – to acquire qualitative and quantitative statements about the course and the results of the training measure.

In the German network the picture was determined by a mixture of self-evaluation and external evaluation: the central network steering group concerned itself with controlling the common objectives and this was supplemented by regular self-evaluation on the part of the network actors with regard to the indicators in their spheres of influence.

The complexity of their objectives and structures has led other networks to develop a body responsible particularly for quality management and answerable to central network steering. Thus in the Dutch ROC OverGelder network, two quality managers were employed – in addition to the central steering group – to deal with the daily requirements of quality management. The quality managers were responsible for giving advice to individual education departments or faculties; in addition, they were also required to provide new impulses for general further development of the implemented quality assurance system. In the Portuguese network two members of the vocational college have the task of improving the network actors' awareness of certification and quality management matters by means of seminars. Human resources of this kind, which neither form part of the central steering group nor the individual network actors, can play – as managers of change (cf. section 4.1.2) – a very dynamic role in the development of quality.

Table 3: Steering and control instruments used by networks

EU country	**Steering instruments developed and in use**	
Germany	Steering instruments:	innovation pools
	Control instruments:	self-evaluation, external evaluation
Ireland	Steering instruments:	Springboard board, programme supervision
	Control instruments:	Evaluation, monitoring of training courses, participant surveys
Italy	Steering instruments:	seminars to discuss and define quality standards, accreditation and certification of training institutions according to ISO 9000
	Control instruments:	accreditation and certification
Netherlands I	Steering instruments:	'Steering Group Quality Management'; education supporting staff; two quality coordinators for daily quality management
	Control instruments:	annual self-evaluation
Netherlands II	Steering instruments:	Interim evaluation; steering group
	Control instruments:	participant whereabouts data, controlling (planned)
Portugal	Steering instruments:	steering by vocational school
	Control instruments:	employment development, participant whereabouts data, self-evaluation
Sweden	Steering instruments:	management meetings, conferences on special subjects
	Control instruments:	Evaluation sheets for participant survey after every course (sole instrument for quality control); ascertainment of firms' requirements by counselling meetings every six months; evaluation and identification of training needs
United Kingdom	Steering instruments:	core group of eight institutions
	Control instruments:	participant surveys, inspection process

In contrast to trainers, they are hardly involved in the day-to-day business of vocational training and hence are in a position to elaborate methodological and systematic proposals for quality improvement. The experience of the ROC OverGelder clearly demonstrates that these 'quality commissioners' have to reflect both on their proposals and on their practicality, as well as taking the situation of other network actors into account. Thus, in this network for instance, it became evident that the education departments sometimes felt overwhelmed by the quality development demands being made on them and hence came to regard quality as an additional burden rather than a development opportunity.

This example shows not only that performance of the managers of change does not merely depend on their professional skills, but that a number of other relevant abilities are also required for successful networking (cf. section 4.1.2).

In the other networks quality management at organisational level forms a direct part of central network steering. The above-mentioned control and steering instruments are the direct responsibility of this central body to the extent that it initiates the use of these instruments and draws (possible) conclusions from the results of quality management. In the Irish Springboard network, central steering is ensured by a coordinating group (board) which meets periodically. Participant surveys, trainer supervisions and evaluations of the training programmes are used as control instruments; the results are made available to the central management board. In Sweden, central coordination of the network is performed by management meetings of the key actors and via conferences on special topics which are organised as required. The results of quality management, which is essentially based on customer survey instruments, serve to inform this central coordinating body.

Due to its orientation to the development of a unified regional certification and quality management sytem, the Italian network in Emilia Romagna occupies a special position. The network's aims mean that it is not required to take on practical steering functions for the vocational training measures carried out by actors. Whilst quality development forms the constitutive element of cooperation in the network, its practical implementation remains the responsibility of the individual actors.

The way in which quality management is handled by the various networks differs considerably depending on their structures and the objectives they pursue. Furthermore, the application of concrete instruments in the service of the indicators described in this section should be differentiated from the way in which quality management is embedded organisationally. In general, it is possible to say that from an organisational point of view, quality management tends to be a fundamental component of the central coordinating structure, even if subordinate bodies are occasionally entrusted with specific tasks. This attribution of quality management to the central steering body imparts highest priority to the question of quality. In addition, feedback of the results of quality management to the central steering body is also of elementary importance, because it is in the nature of the functioning of this body that it should have the power and opportunity to draw appropriate conclusions regarding changes to be made and to initiate necessary improvements in quality.

4.4 Stages in the development of networks and quality-oriented management: risks and opportunities

In the previous chapters we began by examining the organisational structures of networks from a systematic perspective and then went on to analyse the relation between networks and quality development in greater depth. In the following section we shall consider the connection between networks and quality-oriented management from the point of view of their historical and systemic dynamics, taking their most significant developmental stages as our points of reference.

Identification of deficits in the vocational training system

All of the eight networks in our case studies share the same origins in as far as they all arose from the perception of specific deficits in the vocational training system. Training was perceived as failing to correspond to the requirements of the business community (Sweden) or there was a lack of transparency in the training market (UK), specific target groups were being inadequately reached by the existing training opportunities (NL, Tilburg) or there were not enough training places available in the region (D). As we have seen, these deficits have only a limited connection with the question of quality in the narrower sense. The deficits are situated less at the level of individual training institutions but tend rather to affect primarily the interfaces between the actors. Hence the deficits can only be resolved via cooperation between the actors. The structural problems of the training system thus not only provide an initial impetus but are also a constitutive factor for the creation of networks.

Interaction between the actors

The perception of existing deficits does not automatically lead to the best and most effective way of solving the problems. Instead, a network's problem-solving capacity is decisively determined by the quality of the cooperation between the actors, which in turn is shaped initially by previous contacts, experience and the trust which has grown between the actors, as well as by natural competition and conflicts of interest between them. When a network is being founded these kinds of – often well-established – traditions of local cooperation between individual actors cannot be ignored, yet the further development of cooperative relations often depends on the transcendence of hitherto existing relations. A network can only significantly improve the quality of the vocational training system in as far as cooperation between its actors is characterized not merely by lobbying and limited individual interests; it does not have to include all the local actors, but its functioning will be limited if important actors remain excluded. There is however a price attached to effective cooperative relations: new demands are made of all the actors, and these demands are often linked to painful experiences. To put it positively, the effectiveness of network interaction is all the greater, the more it succeeds in loosening rigid coalitions, overcoming fossilized cooperative structures, diffusing conflicts of interest where they exist and helping to create cooperative relations based on the equal partnership of all the actors involved.

Agreement on common objectives

The existence of a structural problem affecting a number of actors in the vocational training system and hence leading to their association, does not yet automatically imply that the actors also agree on the adequate ways and means of solving the problem. Even diagnosis of the initial situation can be a matter of controversy between actors at the beginning of the networking process. Network activities usually build upon pre-existing contacts and more informal methods of cooperation dictated by the individual interests of the actors. The decisive hurdle in the path towards networking has been overcome once the actors recognize a common interest in the resolution of structural problems which transcends their own individual concerns. Only on this basis can the actors develop common objectives and formulate them as an independent quality dimension of their network.

Procurement of resources

For networks to realise their jointly defined and independent objectives, they naturally have to make use of additional resources. This is especially true when objectives are complex, requiring continual effort for them to be achieved in the medium or long term. However, the network actors' willingness to make their own resources available for the overall goals of the network is limited. Thus, the procurement of resources represents a further decisive step towards successful networking. If a network has a continual lack of resources and is hence unable to coordinate its activities, it is safe to assume that the actors' commitment to the network objectives will evaporate over time. Some of the networks in the case studies acquired additional resources via European programmes to promote innovations in vocational training. Other networks, based on the initiatives of State actors, receive support from these same key actors. The German network has developed a successful low-budget approach to the aquisition of additional resources. Here, network actors set aside specific blocks of staff time for network activities.

Creation of steering structures

The creation of steering structures for network activities depends on the existence of independent resources. A management structure which is independent of individual actors is especially necessary when there are complex joint tasks to be fulfilled, although this then has consequences for the network's understanding of itself as a form of grass-roots democracy. Successful networking is based on the equality and consensus of the actors involved. In this respect the legitimation of the central steering body represents a further hurdle in the development of the network. The greater the active support of the network actors, the more efficient can be the functioning of the steering body. Yet because networking is based on the continual cooperation of all actors, acceptance of the central steering structure and the activities it initiates needs to be continually reconstituted, even if the problem of legitimation was satisfactorily resolved in the implementation phase. In day-to-day networking, acceptance of the steering structure thus depends on the professional and personal competence of the people entrusted with the steering tasks, people described here as managers of change.

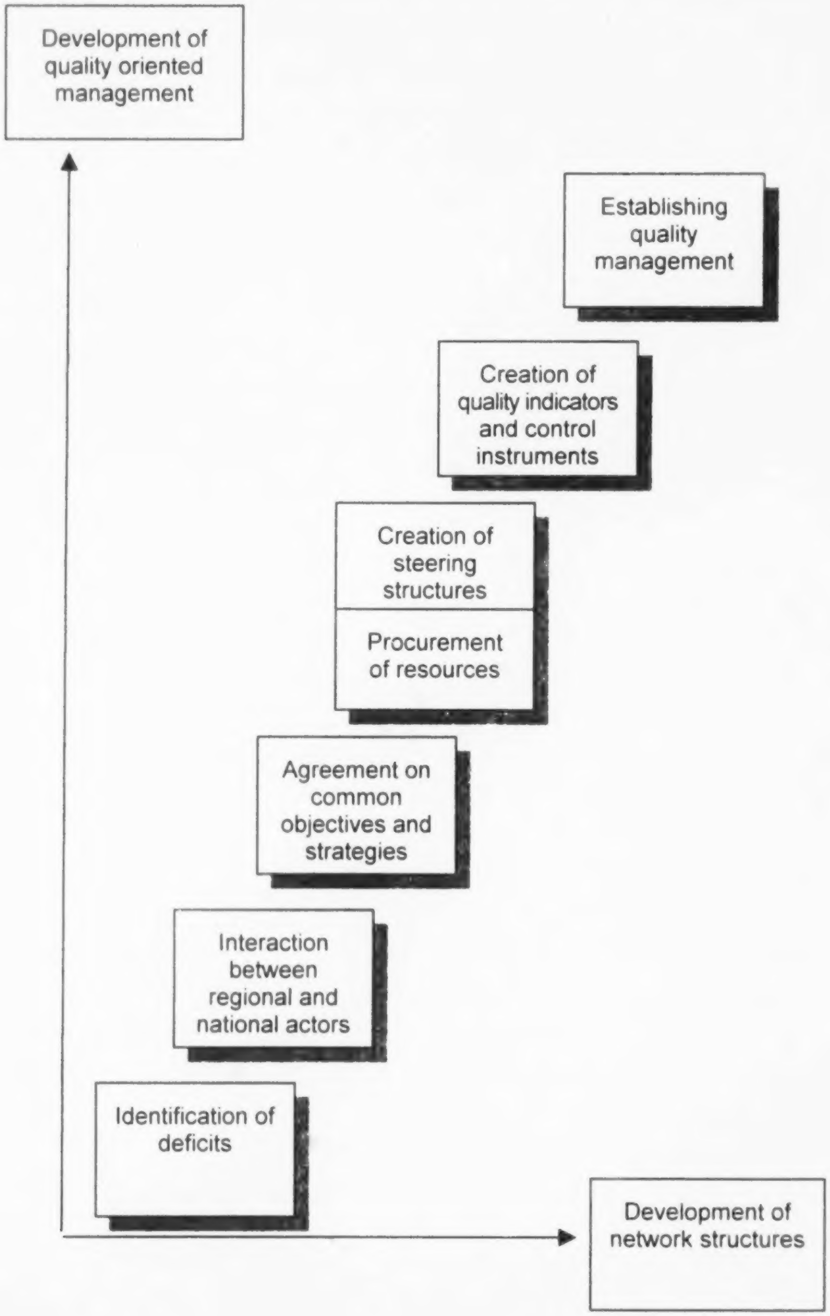
Creation of quality indicators and control instruments

As we have shown in this section, an understanding of quality is always directly related to the network objectives. Hence the responsibility for the attainment of the network's quality objectives is a matter for the central steering structure. By contrast, the development of appropriate instruments and indicators to check the level of quality objective attainment represents an independent task and also characterises the next stage in the development of the network. The agreement on common quality objectives and indicators is an important precondition to develop a system of quality management.

Development of quality management

However, case studies have shown that the development and refinement of quality management instruments can indeed be entrusted to relevantly qualified specialists. The critical point in this stage of development is the implementation of the steering and control instruments. Without the cooperation of local actors even the most ambitious of quality management schemes is bound to fail. A quality management project cannot be realised by the experts alone, but only via the common efforts of the steering structure and network actors.

Illustration 3: Development of networks and quality management


Development of quality oriented management
Establishing quality management
Creation of quality indicators and control instruments
Creation of steering structures
Procurement of resources
Agreement on common objectives and strategies
Interaction between regional and national actors
Identification of deficits
Development of network structures

The above analysis represents a reconstruction of an ideal development of network structures and quality oriented management. From the empirical course of network development observed in the case studies we abstracted seven decisive developmental stages. Our observations centered on the challenges and risks inherent in the individual stages. At the same time we also identified a number of components which could be seen as decisive for the existence, consolidation and further development of the networks: without agreement on common objectives cooperation between the actors falters, without resources there is no independent steering structure for the network, without a steering structure there is no quality management, etc.

In the following section, we shall discuss in more detail concrete problems of development, particularly in the field of quality management, as well as the strategies used by networks to deal with such problems.

4.5 Barriers and hindrances to network development

The following analysis of hindrances and barriers during the development of networks is intended to contribute to a deeper understanding of the developmental dynamics, which we have just outlined. We begin by discussing the problems arising in the start-up phase of networks and then concentrate on questions of quality management.

4.5.1 Starting problems for the networks

Many problems occurred during the founding and start-up phase of networks. The network actors' initial difficulties in identifying areas where requirements for action existed and in developing common objectives have already been discussed above (cf. 4.4). Beyond this, the success or failure of a network evidently depends on the generation of trust between the actors and on the way in which the joint activities are initiated.

With regard to the requirements for action and the identification of common objectives, a number of case studies discovered a barrier in the form of a 'rationality trap', which can be characterised in the following way: a regional vocational training structure may be increasingly inefficient, yet the advantages may still outweigh the disadvantages for the majority of the actors involved. At most, the disfunctionality of the system as a whole is perceived as a diffuse cost pressure. As long as the disadvantages of the system as a whole only peripherally affect the individual activities of the actors, the rationality trap remains in effect. This explains the initial reservations on the part of individual actors towards change. 'The fear of the unknown' – as the British case study puts it – prevents the network actors from achieving mutual understanding. In this phase the necessity for cooperation is seen by the actors not as an opportunity but in many cases as a painful confrontation.

The necessary agreement on common objectives is often frustrated by actors putting their own individual interests first, hence blocking the development of a network identity. The Irish Springboard network showed that, while all the organisations shared a common overall aim of improving conditions in Belfast and Dublin each organisation brought with it its own ideas of how that should be done. 'Initially, each organisation viewed Springboard as a means of furthering its own identity and ambitions.'[15]

The British case study reported that competition among training providers also contributed to these inhibiting effects. This network, which aimed to create a broker agency, was initially confronted with fear that existing customers would merely be redistributed. The development of the network seemed blocked by fear of individual disadvantage. Only once the additional, universally supported objective of using the agency to acquire new customers had been formulated, did the actors regard their individual interests as adequately represented.

A fundamental factor which helped to overcome this type of barrier was shown to be the development of trust between network actors. Thus in Portugal, the network process was strengthened when entrepreneurs received trainees for their working experiences and placements where they could see the quality of training. The experiences made during this process provided a basis for mutual trust, which subsequently led to a gradual integration of actors into the network.

In the further course of their development, many networks were faced with the challenge of constituting an effective organisational structure for their activities. We have already discussed the question of legitimation (cf. section 4.4). Many networks also experienced additional difficulty during the start-up phase in finding the right balance between the independent activities on the part of the providers and the tasks of the central steering structure: if the steering structure acts too offensively, actors react with resistance; if the independent activity of the actors predominates, then the overall network objectives are at risk. As the experiences of the case studies emphasise, development problems of this kind cannot be solved by formal, organisational means alone; the decisive factor is represented rather by the competences, both professional and personnel-related, of the managers of change functioning as the steering structure.

4.5.2 Problems of quality development

In connection with the question of quality, the various perspectives and points of view of the actors are the prime problem, because it is on these that a number of different quality priorities depend. Yet, as all the case studies confirm, improvements in the quality of the vocational training system depend on the joint activity of actors. The integration of diversity into an integrative concept of quality is no simple matter, as noted by the British case study: 'Developing a quality process which all the people involved sign up to is a serious concern'.[16] This once again requires mutual understanding and tolerance on the part of the actors. The British UFI network was ultimately successful in implementing joint quality management for the brokerage centre, 'because it has been prepared to take calculated risks. The view of the partners is that this should not be stifled by a heavily centralised approach to quality compliance'.[17]

---

[15] cf. case study on the Springboard network by Anton and Sean Trant.

[16] cf. case study on the UFI network – North East Pilot of England by Maria Hughes.

[17] l.c.

The differing situations and interests of the actors result not only in discrepancies in the understanding of the jointly-defined quality characteristics, but occasionally also in problems between actors regarding the handling of the quality management. In the Dutch ROC OverGelder network, the guidelines for quality management implementation which the quality managers had drawn up during the start-up phase proved to be far too theoretical; in spite of their good will, the actors were unable to transfer these quality concepts to their courses. The Portuguese network attempted to solve this kind of implementation problem by initiating internal further training measures on questions of quality.

Furthermore, a lack of staff or financial capacity can block the development of the quality dimension for individual actors and hence lead to diverging results at network level in the implementation of quality management. The effect of this type of asynchrony on the Dutch ROC OverGelder network was such that an overall system of quality management was in place for the ROC as a whole, although it had not yet been implemented for the individual sectors.

In this section we have analysed the case studies to identify further barriers and hindrances which have a counterproductive effect on network development. In most cases however, the case studies also provided us with relevant options and strategies to deal with the development problems as documented: the key is usually to be found in equal cooperation of all the actors involved.

4.6 Preconditions for successful networking

The previous sections' analyses of the barriers and hindrances to networking have clearly shown that success or failure of local cooperation in the field of vocational training depends on specific conditions. In the following section we summarize the preconditions for successful networking.

Networks which have as their aim the optimisation of the vocational training system are based first and foremost on an equal partnership in relations between the most important local actors. The initiation phase nevertheless requires high-profile foundation management to organize the necessary exchange processes between local actors and to create the required links to sources of information and decision-makers external to the network. Not only does the actor responsible for foundation management have to have the staff resources needed to fulfill these organisational tasks, in addition, the foundation manager's activities should also be characterized by constant commitment and a wealth of ideas.

Ideally, foundation management should be sponsored by a publicly funded body such as a regional development agency (as in Portugal) or a public training provider (as in Germany). If this is not the case, the necessary input has to be provided by several institutions jointly. In this case (as in Sweden and the United Kingdom), the nucleus of the network is formed by a core group of actors who have already been in cooperation with each other for some time and who have established a basis of mutual trust. For the other actors this relatively stable association can act both as a guarantee of efficiency and as an example of a functioning cooperative partnership.

By this stage of development at the latest, it is essential the network receives the support of regional political decision makers. The involvement of State actors, whether in the form of actual cooperation in the network or as declarations of support or political directives, has proven in most networks to be an important precondition for readiness to cooperate among vocational training policy actors.

Further network development is also considerably influenced by the actions of State actors. These actors are generally charged with the task of defining the parameters for the reorganisation of the vocational training system and providing local actors with the relevant incentives for them to develop reform strategies and hence also to give concrete shape to the framework for activity which has been created. This also includes financial resources required for networking.

Once the foundation phase has been concluded, local network performance is largely dependent on the establishment of an institutionalised steering structure accepted by all the actors involved. At this stage, network development can be said to have been successful when the central steering tasks and the independent interests of the actors involved have been balanced out.

The increasing significance of quality objectives means that the central steering structure needs to be highly differentiated. It was not possible to identify a quality-oriented steering structure which could be taken as a model in a general sense. From an organisational point of view, the steering structure's link to the central network structure seems to be of major significance; from an operational perspective the development of an adequate set of instruments to measure the quality dimension as agreed between the actors can be said to pose the decisive challenge. To summarize both aspects: the quality-oriented steering of a network requires not only the development of an indicator-based evaluation system and the application of the corresponding instruments of data collection and evaluation, but also necessitates the continual feedback of the quality management results to the network's central steering body.

4.7 Summary

The intensive analysis of the eight case studies undertaken in this chapter is based on four primary aspects. Our first emphasis was on the network actors and their functions; we were then concerned with the understanding of quality in the network process, followed by the approaches developed by networks with regard to the steering and measuring of quality characteristics. Finally, we reconstructed the course of development of the networks and the problems arising in this process.

Six of the eight case study networks approached the question of quality via a detour consisting of the formulation of general target figures for the improvement of the regional vocational training systems. It was the subsequent achievement of these target figures which entailed an increase in the quality of the systems. Only in the Italian and Dutch ROC OverGelder networks did the quality dimension figure at the outset of their activities.

Whilst direct concern for the specific characteristics of quality in vocational training and the operationalisation of quality indicators formed part of the originally intended function of these two networks, in the other networks a concept of quality was developed as an integral part of their general activity planning. The networks' approaches to the question of quality were initially decisively influenced by these different perspectives on activity and objectives.

The quality aspects of the network were also decisively shaped by the interests of the network actors. A key function was exercised by the State actors, who were surprisingly often responsible for providing the initial impetus for the foundation of a network and who also influenced the course of network activities in their role as key actors. It was also possible to observe interesting interaction between regional and national levels during initiation of the networks. Whilst the contribution of local and regional vocational training actors was decisive in identifying existing deficits and in many cases also providing possible solutions, the State actors active at national level were responsible for providing an overall definition of problems and objectives.

State actors limit themselves at national level to the formulation of objectives which then opens up a general framework of activity within which the regional actors can put their solutions into practice. In some cases, regional State actors occupy a mediating position to concretise further this general framework and to adapt it to local conditions; a key role in this process is played by State-run regional training institutions. Local actors are then faced with the challenge and the opportunity of utilising the prescribed activity framework to achieve their goals and of cooperating in the network to develop joint strategies to improve quality in the vocational training system.

Our analysis of the course of development of the networks has clearly shown that network actors first have to agree on a small number of common goals in order to achieve the minimal consensus necessary to create a basis for common activity. The networking process takes place as a continual exchange of communication on such common objectives and on the ways and means of achieving them. One of the strengths of networking is that the skills and resources of the network actors are pooled and applied to achieve qualitative improvements in vocational training and further training.

As the complexity of networks increases, so too does the significance of the internal coordination and steering functions, and this in turn places new demands on the actors' willingness to cooperate. Usually it is necessary to procure new resources to be in a position to establish these higher functions. In addition, the question as to who takes on this function is also of critical importance. The steering structures are initially determined solely by the common objectives and tasks of the network actors; once again, quality questions are initially of no significance. In six of the eight case studies the steering structures were first oriented towards the management of the network before they could be used as a base for quality management instruments.

As a rule a steering group is created from among the key actors, which can later be supplemented by an independent body responsible for quality management. By this phase at the latest, the actors should have agreed upon the central quality characteristics of their joint work. Once this stage has been successfully completed, attention is turned towards the development of indicators and instruments enabling the measurement and control of the network's quality objectives. All the networks made use of a set of qualitative and quantitative indicators adapted to their specific needs to measure and evaluate the quality characteristics they had defined. An important role was also played by coordinating training supply with the qualification demands of regional firms, as well as by measuring result and outcome variables among training participants (qualifications, whereabouts). A further, fundamentally important step was the continual feedback of quality management results to the network's central steering structure. The circle is then closed by the measures which the steering structure subsequently puts into effect to achieve further quality improvements.

In spite of their differences in objectives and structures, the networks examined in the case studies all make an important contribution towards improving the vocational training systems in their regions:

- They support reform of the vocational training system by identifying structural problems and developing regional solutions which can serve as a guide at national decision-making level.
- In their role as public-private partnerships they help overcome existing antagonisms between private and State actors and bring their advantages together to increase the quality of vocational training.
- They pool the skills and resources of local actors, thus attacking structural problems in the vocational training system.
- They bring together the different interests and perspectives of regional actors to form a comprehensive quality concept for vocational training.
- They develop joint instruments and indicators with which they are able to measure the improvements in vocational training they intend to achieve.

With regard to the question of quality, the most important function of networks is probably their pragmatic approach to dealing with this concept. Their activities are concentrated not on an abstract concept but on the central factors determining quality, factors which can differ quite significantly in form. The real significance of networks lies less in the improvement of this or that individual quality characteristic than in the way in which their dynamism brings about a continual process of development and renewal within the vocational training system.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

This study has shown, through its analysis of eight case studies of exemplary networks from seven European countries, not only that networking between local actors can contribute to an improvement in quality in the field of vocational training, but has also demonstrated how this has been achieved. Cooperation between actors in public-private partnerships and the associated decentralisation of planning and decision-making responsibilities onto local and regional networks releases previously unused resources and creative potential which can lead to enhanced problem-solving capacities. Fruitful and mutually reinforcing effects were often created between top-down and bottom-up-oriented initiatives for qualitative improvements in the vocational training systems, effects which meant that local, regional and national reform approaches could act to complement each others' efforts.

In this final chapter we would like to present possible conclusions and recommendations based on the results of the study, as well as discussing the following points in more detail:

- the potential of local networks for achieving a qualitative improvement in the vocational training system;
- the role of State actors in initiating and promoting local networks;
- future development and funding requirements for networks in the field of vocational training.

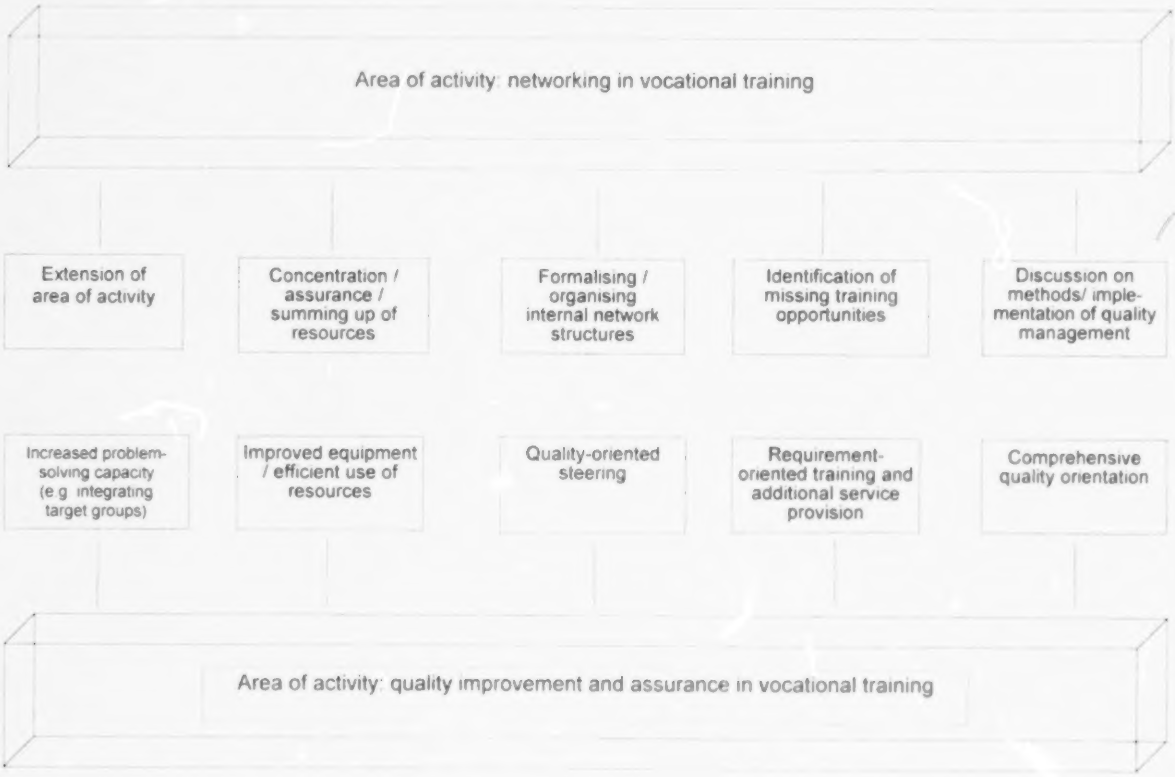
5.1 Local networking as a concept for system innovation

This study was based on the assumption that local networks are capable of making a contribution of some sort to the enhancement of vocational training quality. The case studies have provided impressive confirmation of this hypothesis. They have shown that activities of networks are directed particularly towards changing and improving the structural contexts within which vocational training takes place. The specific innovative potential of local networks lies in the possibility of identifying problems immanent in the vocational training system and in the development of solution strategies adapted to local and regional conditions. In spite of the initially limited range of networks, it also seems possible that the innovative strategies developed by the local networks might be generalised in a second step, in order then to be transferred to other regions or even to be integrated into national planning and development concepts for vocational training. In any case, a number of case studies have emphasised that a transfer of local innovations to the regional or national vocational training systems can be organized successfully.

These possibilities for transfer ought to receive greater attention and be adequately harnessed in future precisely because network innovations are primarily directed towards solving structural problems within the vocational training system which cannot be overcome by individual institutions acting on their own. The activities of networks in the case studies serve to improve the functioning of the vocational training system from a structural perspective. The case studies have, for example, documented how regional opportunities for vocational training and further training can be better tailored to the requirements of the business community and the target groups of labour market policy. Improvements have been made in the institutional infrastructure and initiatives have been taken to achieve greater transparency for providers and customers on the training market. All these approaches to quality improvement are concerned with fundamental questions of efficiency of the vocational training system, which is why networking between the relevant actors can unequivocally be classified as a concept for system innovation.

The case studies have, however, also made clear that it is not possible to posit a clear causal relationship between local networking and quality development. Whilst in all cases local networking provides effective improvements to vocational training from a quality perspective sooner or later, the networks' concrete quality objectives could only be related to elements of structure, process or result quality to a limited extent. The network actors were only able to relate to the question of quality via the circuitous route of the specific problems of their regional vocational training system which they had jointly identified. They were then able to formulate their common objectives, which in turn enabled them to deduce the quality dimensions relevant for their situation. In other words, their understanding of quality is primarily oriented to areas of the vocational training system relevant to the network. Illustration 4 shows in an exemplary way this kind of activity-oriented connection between quality and networking.

Illustration 4: Interface between network development and quality improvement


Area of activity: networking in vocational training
Extension of area of activity
Concentration / assurance / summing up of resources
Formalising / organising internal network structures
Identification of missing training opportunities
Discussion on methods/ implementation of quality management
Increased problem-solving capacity (e.g. integrating target groups)
Improved equipment / efficient use of resources
Quality-oriented steering
Requirement-oriented training and additional service provision
Comprehensive quality orientation
Area of activity: quality improvement and assurance in vocational training

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The connections between networking and quality development illustrated here clearly show that cooperation between actors only rarely follows the narrowly defined concept of quality as employed in the context of accreditation or certification systems. However, this should be seen less as a weakness than as the genuine strength of the concept of quality as promoted by local network actors. With its orientation to quality objectives tailored to individual activities, this concept is open for continual development – for quality dimensions change and evolve in accordance with the main objectives of networks. Hence the concept of quality as practised by networks can ultimately be seen as an adequate expression of an approach to action directed towards systemic innovations.

5.2 State actors as networking catalysts

One of the fundamental insights of the present study is that the success of local networks is essentially based on cooperation and dialogue between public and private actors and on the mutually complementary effects of top-down and bottom-up policy approaches. The fact that State, intermediary and private-sector actors are able to contribute their own specific strengths to the process of cooperating to improve the quality of the vocational training system is of decisive importance. Whilst the State bodies define the general framework for new developments, the local actors have the task of identifying existing deficits and developing solutions adapted to local conditions.

In several respects State actors play a key role, which is why we recommend that in future public decision-makers should make even greater efforts to promote long-term reform in the vocational training system.

As the case studies show, State actors are often the source of decisive impulses for the foundation of local networks. In some cases, the aegis of political and administrative bodies can encourage local actors to cooperate and act in unison, and sometimes an official reference is enough to turn loose contacts between vocational training actors into an institutionalised network. In addition, State bodies can also use appropriate directives to define the basic orientation of activities of the network actors, as well as supporting the network in the achievement of its goals, whether by active involvement in the network activities or by providing additional financial resources. Generally speaking, the State bodies have the task of defining parameters for the reorganisation of the vocational training system and of providing the corresponding incentives for the actors to develop reform strategies and hence to give concrete shape to the framework within which their activities are to take place. In a more prescriptive variant of the administration of local networks, future State funding for vocational training actors could be linked to the attainment of certain quality standards, such as the certification or accreditation of the relevant institution. In spite of the fact that the power to define such standards lies with the State, the actors are still free to make their own decisions as to how they wish to achieve the prescribed quality objectives.

It is in the nature of the function of networks that they should pursue overarching objectives which are beyond, or only partially within the immediate responsibilities of the individual actors. Whatever may be the concrete tasks which the local networks have to deal with, the more complex the overarching objectives are, the more urgently the network requires an independent management and steering structure. As one of the case studies shows, the required resources can in part be obtained by a redistribution of tasks between the network actors. Where this is not the case, State bodies may be called upon to provide staff and financial resources to support the network's activities for the improvement of quality in vocational training.

5.3 Future development and funding requirements of the networks

As we have seen, the efficiency of networks is highly dependant on the creation of adequate management and steering structures. Experience has shown that an effective preliminary structure can be constituted by a steering group made up of the most important actors, although this group quickly requires organisational support in coping with the everyday tasks of coordinating the network actors and keeping them informed. Further network development entails the increasing professionalisation of this coordination function, resulting in an institutionalised independent management structure. In a further stage of development this central steering structure is subdivided into specific departments and a body responsible for quality management is created. In this context, feedback of quality management results to the network's central steering body has proven to be of critical significance.

Our description of an ideal case does, however, conceal the fact that in practice networks have immense problems with the development of efficient steering models; in reality this is more of an incremental process guided by trial and error. Traditional organisational models cannot be grafted indiscriminately onto this form of cooperation between actors whose objectives and interests may or may not coincide, which is why considerable research and development work still has to be done on the subject of steering models, work which CEDEFOP could also undertake in appropriate studies.

In view of the complex tasks associated with the steering of networks and the coordination of actors, particular demands are made of managerial staff, who we have described above as managers of change. These managers of change must on the one hand be able to take the initiative and give instructions in order to achieve specific goals for the network. On the other hand, they must continually discuss their proposals with the network actors, be prepared to negotiate and compromise with the actors, mediate when there is a conflict of interest and act as a force for integration. Until now these network skills have arisen more or less of their own accord, yet the deficits and bottlenecks at the level of steering competences which negatively affect network development cannot be ignored. This also points towards areas of potential work for CEDEFOP, such as examining the qualification profiles of managers of change in local networks in greater detail and devising suggestions for the systematic training of competences of this kind.

This study has also shown that specific indicators and instruments are required for the steering of local networks and, in particular, for the measurement of quality objective attainment. Traditional quality management instruments have limited applicability for network system objectives. Hence testing for network objectives requires genuine quality characteristics with an adapted catalogue of qualitative and quantitative indicators and measuring instruments tailored, in part, to the specific objectives of the networks. One topic of central importance is, for example, the implementation and control of result and outcome variables among participants in vocational training measures (qualifications, whereabouts).

Here too, network practice still shows room for improvement. Whilst it cannot be denied that the networks in the studies pay serious attention both to the implementation of quality indicators and to the evaluation of the effects of their work, and although one can safely assume that a number of networks have even performed pioneering work in this sector, nevertheless the results achieved cannot yet be regarded as satisfactory. The operationalisation of quality in the networking context and the development of indicators and instruments to test quality characteristics continues to present an important challenge. In this respect, the development of manuals for network self-evaluation would be particularly useful. We also recommend that partnerships should be set up between local networks and scientific and research institutions, a process in which CEDEFOP could play a mediating role.

Further, hitherto inadequately used development potential is also to be found in the transfer of locally developed innovations to the regional and national vocational training system. As demonstrated above (cf. section 5.1), networks represent a method of activity which is oriented towards systemic innovation. The generalisation, transfer and application to other contexts of the experiences made in these processes represents an essential task for all actors committed to vocational training reform.

References

Åberg, J.-O. (1997) Det rationella och det legitima. En studie av utvärderingars teori och praktik. University of Gothenburg.

Abreu, J. B. (1994) Gestão da Formação. Para uma formação profissional de qualidade. In: Formar, n° 10, pp. 67-70.

Ansaloni, D. (1990) Gli indicatori di qualità nei sistemi formativi. Bologna.

Audit Commission/HMI (1992) Can value-added indicators be applied to vocational courses?

Azevedo, J. (1994) Avenidas de Liberdade. Reflexões sobre politica educative.

Bader, S., J. Carlsson (1997) Bygg på befintlig grund, TEK. Ett nätverk i tiden. Student report, University of Halmstad.

Beinum, H. v. (1997) Zur Praxis der Arbeitsforschung. In: Werner Fricke (ed): Aktionsforschung und industrielle Demokratie. Bonn.

Beinum, H. v., C. Faucheux, R. v.d. Vlist (1996) Reflections on the epigenetic significance of Action Research. In: Toulmin, S., Gustavsen, B.: Beyond Theory. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia.

Beutler, K., B. Groeger u.a. (ed) (1996) Qualitätsmanagement für GewerkschafterInnen. ISO 9000, Arbeitsbedingungen, Handlungsmöglichkeiten. Hamburg.

Birkhölzer, K., G. Lorenz (1997) Die Rolle von Partnerschaften bei der Förderung sozialen Zusammenhalts. Lokale Partnerschaften zur Bekämpfung sozialer Ausgrenzung und zur Förderung sozialer Kohäsion in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Berlin.

Björkemarken, M. (1996) Implementeringsanalys som komplement vid utvärdering. En fråga om perspektiv och förklaring. University of Gothenburg.

Bötel, C., K. Merx (1997) Qualität in der beruflichen Bildung. Ein sächsisches Markenzeichen. IES-Bericht Nr. 114/97, Hannover/Leipzig.

Bruscaglioni, M. (1991) La qualità nella Formazione. In: FOR, no 12.

Bundesvereinigung Kulturelle Jugendbildung (1998) Qualitätssicherung durch Evaluation. Remscheid.

Bve-Procescoördinatie (1997) Sprong naar kwaliteit. Bunnik.

Bve-Raad (1998) Bve-Manifest Beroepsonderwijs werkt. De Bilt.

Campos, B. P. (1993) Perspectivas de formação continua de professores. In: Revista Educação, n° 6, pp. 19-30.

Castro, A. (1993) Educação e formação continua. In: Revista Educação, n° 6, pp. 58-60.

Chen, H.-T. (1994) Theory-driven evaluations. London.

Ciampolini, F. (1993) La didattica breve. Insegnare e studiare in meno tempo per una formazione a qualità totale. Bologna.

Ciccarelli, L. (1993) La Qualità nella Formazione. Roma.

Climaco, M. d. C. (1992) Monitorização e práticas de avaliação das escolas. Lisboa.

Cremers, H.H.G. (1998) Handboek Onderwijs en Arbeid. Alphen aan den Rijn.

Curriculum Development Unit (1996) Evaluation report on wider horizons programme of the International Fund for Ireland. Dublin.

Czarniawska, B. (1997) Narrating the organization. Chicago.

Danilda, I., K. Stridh (1998) A story of improvement. methods and tools for qualitative evaluation of European projects. In: CAU Report No 1/98.

Dearing, R. (1996) Review of qualifications for 16-19 year olds. Department for Education and Employment.

De Blok, R. (1998) Beroepsonderwijs werkt, maar dat kost ook wat. In: Bve Radius, nr 8, p. 6-8.

De Boer, B. (1997) Berufsbildung in europäischer Perspektive. Fernkurs für die berufsbegleitende Fortbildung an Thüringer Berufsschulen. Göttingen

De Ridder, W., R. Urbach (1997) Kwaliteitszorgverslag ROC-OverGelder.

Dell, J., G. Schmidt, F. Trautenhahn (1997) Qualitätsmanagement macht Schule. Ein Leitfaden. Bönen.

Department of Education (1995) Charting our education future. White Paper on education. Dublin.

Department for Education and Employment (1993) Charter for further education.

Department for Education and Employment (1996) Strengthening self-assessment and introducing an external inspection regime in government funded training. A consultation paper.

Department of Enterprise and Employment (1997) White Paper. Human resource development. Dublin.

Dixon, S. (1996) Towards self-assessing colleges.

Dort, S., H.J. Petzold (1991) Verbundsysteme in der beruflichen Bildung. Planungsbeispiele und regionale Praxiserfahrungen. Heidelberg.

Durand, C. (1991) Fallstudien in der international vergleichenden Organisationsforschung. In: Heidenreich, M. u.a. (eds.): International vergleichende Organisationsforschung. Darmstadt.

Enaip (1991) La Qualità Totale della Formazione Professionale. Supp a Terra Veneta, n. 3, PD.

Ente Nazionale Italiano di Unificazione (UNI) (1998) Linee guida per lo sviluppo e l'adozione di un sistema di qualità negli organismi di formazione. Milano.

Europäische Kommission (1996) Lehren und Lernen. Auf dem Weg zur kognitiven Gesellschaft. Weißbuch zur allgemeinen und beruflichen Bildung. Luxemburg.

Europäische Kommission (1997) Territoriale Beschäftigungspakte. Beispiele für gute Praxis. Luxemburg.

Europäische Kommission (1998a) Lokale Partnerschaften gegen Arbeitslosigkeit und soziale Ausgrenzung. Luxemburg.

European Commission (1998b) Second report on local development and employment initiatives. Working document SEC (98) 25.

Fisher, F.; Forester, J. (eds) (1993) The argumentative turn in policy analysis and planning. London.

Foras Áiseanna Saothair (FÁS) Training and Employment Authority. Services for you. Dublin.

Forester, J. (1989) Planning in the face of power. Berkeley, Los Angeles.

Friedman, C. P. (1997) Evaluation methods in medical informatics. New York.

Friedman, J. (1987) Planning in the public domain. From knowledge to action. Princetown, New Jersey.

Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) (1993) Assessing achievement. In: Circular Nos 11 and 28.

Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) (1997) Validation self-assessment. In: Circular No 12.

Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) (1997) Self-assessment and inspection. In: Circular No 13.

Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) (1997) Joint working: audit and inspection. In: Circular No 22.

Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) (1997) College accreditation. In: Circular No 25.

Further Education Unit (FEU) (1991) Quality matters.

Further Education Unit (FEU) (1993) Value added in further education.

Greeve, S. (1998) The role of social partners in vocational training and education. In: Colo Compass.

Guba, E., Lincoln, Y. (1989) Fourth generation evaluation. London.

Hagedorn, F., S. Jungk, M. Lohmann, H. Meyer (ed) (1994) Anders arbeiten in Bildung und Kultur. Kooperation und Vernetzung als soziales Kapital. Weinheim / Basel.

Heidelberger Institut Beruf und Arbeit (1997) Berufsausbildung und Förderung benachteiligter Jugendlicher. Lernortkooperation gemeinsam gestalten. In: HIBA-Info 1/97.

Hillman, J. (1996) The University for Industry: creating a national learning network.

Hughes, M. (1997) Developing vocational education and training for the 21st Century.

Inspectie van het Onderwijs (1997) De eerste BVE-Kwaliteitszorgverslagen (1996-97).

Inspectie van het Onderwijs (1997) Examenverslag beroepsopleidingen en NT2. Inspectierapport.

Inspectie van het Onderwijs (1997) Werk maken van Maatwerk. In: Inspectierapport, Nos12 and 13.

International Fund for Ireland (1987) Annual report 1986/87. Belfast and Dublin.

International Standarts Organisation (1991-94) ISO.

Istituto per lo Sviluppo della Formatione Professionale dei Lavoratori (ISFOL) (1998) La qualità dei progetti di formazione. Vol. 1: Manuale di supporto per gli operatori; Vol. 2: Guida Operativa. Roma.

Keupp, H., B. Röhrle (ed) (1987) Soziale Netzwerke. Frankfurt/Main.

Lang, R. (ed) (1997) Marktorientierung, Management, Marketing. Impulse für den Sozialbereich? Berlin.

Leenen, I. (1998) Praktijk Leerberdrif Tilburg. Unpublished manuscript, Tilburg.

Lopes, A. (1994) Formação Profissional. Avaliação da eficácia e metáforas dominantes. In: Psicologia, vol. 9, no 3, pp. 307-313.

Lundberg, M., J. Tell (1998) Networks as a way of improving small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises. Chalmers University of Technology, Göteborg.

Martins, G. d'O. (1993) Formar para mobilizar. In: Revista Educação, n° 6, pp. 82-85.

McGarry, J., B. O'Leary (1995) Explaining Northern Ireland. Broken images. Oxford.

Miller, J., S. Innis (1992) Improving quality in further education. A guide for teachers in course teams.

Miller, J., S. Innis (1992) Strategy quality management. A guide for senior managers.

Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen (1998) Onderwijsaanbod voor een goed voorbereide start – een gezamenlijke verantwoordelijkheid. Den Haag.

Monnier, E. (1996) Partnerships. The opportunities and constraints which they pose for high quality evaluations. Paper presented at a European Conference within the MEANS programme in Berlin.

Mutschler, R. (1998) Kooperation ist eine Aufgabe Sozialer Arbeit. In: Blätter der Wohlfahrtspflege/Deutsche Zeitschrift für Sozialarbeit, nr 3/4, pp. 49 – 52.

Naschold, F. (1998) Trends und Problemstellungen im organisatorischen Erneuerungsprozeß (TQM): Evaluationskriterien zur Organisationsentwicklung. In: Volker Graf u.a.: Ein Krankenhaus im Reformprozeß: Melsungen.

Nielsen, P. S., K. Visser (1997) Quality debate in initial vocational education. Thessaloniki.

Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband (1997) König Kunde? Qualität – Kunde – Nutzerbeteiligung. Bonn.

Pätzold, G. (1995) Kooperation zwischen den Lernorten. In: Ausbilder-Handbuch. Aufgaben, Strategien und Zuständigkeiten in der Aus- und Weiterbildung. Köln.

Pollack, A. (ed.) (1992) A citizen's inquiry. The Opsahl report on Northern Ireland. Dublin.

Proceedings Forum Euroformação (1995) Conference „Euroformação/Eurotraining". Lisboa.

Rijn Ijssel College ROC Arnhem (ed.) (1998) Het zal ons een zorg zijn. Een onderzoek naar de kansen van risico leelringen in de regionale opleidingen centra in Nederland. Arnhem.

Romei, P. (1991) La qualità nella Scuola. McGraw Hill.

Selbsthilfe 91 e.V. (ed.) (1998) Vergleich und Auswertung modellhafter Ausbildungsaktivitäten in Ländern der Europäischen Gemeinschaft unter Beachtung der Ausbildung benachteiligter Jugendlicher. Chemnitz.

Seyfried, E., Kohlmeyer, K. (1998) Quality criteria in local networking and cooperation between VET providers. Methodology paper. Berlin.

Siemann, D. (1996) Mit Leistungsbausteinen soziale Arbeit beschreiben. In: Social Management, No 5, pp. 22 – 24.

Sneller, R., Mertens (1998) Herhaalde kritiek op mbo-examens eigenlijk onthutsend. In: Bve Radius.

Sneller, R. (1998) Wat de minister wil zal me een zorg zijn. In: Bve Radius, nr 9, p. 21-22.

Springboard: Strategic plan Springboard 2000. Making a difference and shaping the future. Belfast.

Stahmer, I. (1997) Qualität in Bildungsprozessen. Lübeck.

Stokes D., Watters, E. (1997) Ireland: vocational education and training. A guide. Dublin.

Tallaght Partnership (1994) Area action plan 1994-99. Dublin.

Teknik och Kompetenscentrum (TEK) (1997-1998) Protocols of the association TEK. Newsletters and other information material. Teknik och kompetenscentrum. Unpublished working papers. Halmstad.

Tezza, E. (1992) La Qualità nella Formazione Professionale. Professionalità, n. 10.

The State Tourism Agency (CERT) (1997) Annual report and accounts. Dublin.

Training and Employment Agency: Jobskills. Your future in your hands. Belfast.

Training and Employment Agency (1992) Corporate plan 1992-95. Belfast.

Trant, A., McSkeane, E. (1994) Evaluation of the wider horizons programme of the International Fund for Ireland. Dublin.

Trant, A., Fitzpatrick, D., Medlycott, J., Trant, S., Mollard, A. (1997) Evaluation of the integrated area partnerships of the wider horizons programme of the International Fund for Ireland. Dublin.

Universidade de Lisboa, F.P.C.E. (1997) Proceedings of the conference Avaliação e Qualidade da Formação. Not yet published. Lisboa.

Vairetti U. (1995) Fare qualità nella Scuola. Firenze.

Van den Berghe, W. (1996) Quality issues and trends in vocational education and training in Europe. Luxembourg.

VanderPlaat., M. (1995) Beyond technique. Issues in evaluating for empowerment. In: Evaluation Vol 1:81-96.

Weinböck-Buck, I. (1995) Kooperation zwischen Ausbildern und betrieblichen Fachkräften. Voraussetzungen, Notwendigkeiten und Konsequenzen. In: Ausbilder-Handbuch. Aufgaben, Strategien und Zuständigkeiten in der Aus- und Weiterbildung. Köln.

Whyte, J. (1990) Interpreting Northern Ireland. Oxford.

Ziegler, A. (1997) Lokale und regionale Beschäftigungspakte in Europa. In: WSI Mitteilungen 9/97.

Authors of the case studies

	Name	Institution	Tel./Fax/E-mail
D	Erwin Seyfried Klaus Kohlmeyer Rafael Furth-Riedesser	Forschungsstelle für Berufsbildung, Arbeitsmarkt und Evaluation an der FHVR Berlin Alt-Friedrichsfelde 60 D-10315 Berlin	Tel: 0049.30.90214304 Fax: 0049.30.90214300 e-mail: fbae@fbae.de
IRL	Mr Anton Trant, Mr Sean Trant	Curriculum Development Unit Sundrive Road, IRL-Dublin 12	Tel: 00353.1.4535487 Fax: 00353.1.4537659 e-mail: hopson@cdu.cdvec.ie
I	Mr Pier Luigi Isola, Mr Mauro Cavina, Mr Maurizio Mirri	EFESO Viale Aldo Moro, 16 I-40127 Bologna	Tel: 0039.51.509984 0039.51.508868 Fax: 0039.51.509739 e-mail: efeso@bo.nettuno.it
NL	Mr Bernd de Boer	EUROBRUG Falkensee Mainstr. 11 D-14612 Falkensee	Tel: 0049 3322.28 39 13/14/15 Fax: 0049 3322-28 39 26 e-mail: info@eurobrug.de
NL	Mr Ads Koster	Stichting Provinciaal Steunpunt Werkgelegenheid (psw) (Employment Support Centre) Postbus 558 Lombardje 7-11 NL-5201 AN's-Hertogenbosch	Tel: 0031.73.6124325 Fax: 0031.73.6128575 e-mail: info@psw.nl
P	Emilia Andrade	INC Leonardo Portugal R.Jacinta Marto 8-1^{0} frente P-1150 Lisboa	Tel: 00351.1.356 1840/42 Fax: 00351.1.352 1791 e-mail: leonardo.inc@mail.telepac.pt
S	Kicki Stridh	Internationell kompetens AB Storgatan 31 S-30243 Halmstad	Tel: 0046.35.167100/167352 Fax: 0046.35.128175 e-mail: stridh@intercomp.se
UK	Mrs Maria Hughes	FEDA (Further Education Development Agency) Northern Region Learning world Units 9-11 Allison Court Metro Centre Retail Park Gateshead UK-Tyne and Wear NE11 9YS	Tel: 0044.191.4961144 Fax: 0044.191.4961145 e-mail: mhughes@feda.ac.uk

CEDEFOP – European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

Supporting quality in vocational training through networking

Erwin Seyfried, Klaus Kohlmeyer, Rafael Furth-Riedesser
(FHVR-FBAE Berlin)

CEDEFOP panorama

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

2000 – 71 pp. – 21.0 x 29.7 cm

ISBN 92-828-8368-X

Cat. No: HX-26-99-271-EN-C

Free of charge – 5098 EN –

Venta • Salg • Verkauf • Πωλήσεις • Sales • Vente • Vendita • Verkoop • Venda • Myynti • Försäljning

BELGIQUE/BELGIË

Jean De Lannoy
Avenue du Roi 202/Koningslaan 202
B-1190 Bruxelles/Brussel
Tél. (32-2) 538 43 08
Fax (32-2) 538 08 41
E-mail: jean.de.lannoy@infoboard.be
URL: http://www.jean-de-lannoy.be

La librairie européenne/
De Europese Boekhandel
Rue de la Loi 244/Wetstraat 244
B-1040 Bruxelles/Brussel
Tél. (32-2) 295 26 39
Fax (32-2) 735 08 60
E-mail: mail@libeurop.be
URL: http://www.libeurop.be

Moniteur belge/Belgisch Staatsblad
Rue de Louvain 40-42/Leuvenseweg 40-42
B-1000 Bruxelles/Brussel
Tél. (32-2) 552 22 11
Fax (32-2) 511 01 84

DANMARK

J. H. Schultz Information A/S
Herstedvang 12
DK-2620 Albertslund
Tlf. (45) 43 63 23 00
Fax (45) 43 63 19 69
E-mail: schultz@schultz.dk
URL: http://www.schultz.dk

DEUTSCHLAND

Bundesanzeiger Verlag GmbH
Vertriebsabteilung
Amsterdamer Straße 192
D-50735 Köln
Tel. (49-221) 97 66 80
Fax (49-221) 97 66 82 78
E-Mail: vertrieb@bundesanzeiger.de
URL: http://www.bundesanzeiger.de

ΕΛΛΑΔΑ/GREECE

G. C. Eleftheroudakis SA
International Bookstore
Panepistimiou 17
GR-10564 Athina
Tel. (30-1) 331 41 80/1/2/3/4/5
Fax (30-1) 323 98 21
E-mail: elebooks@netor.gr

ESPAÑA

Boletín Oficial del Estado
Trafalgar, 27
E-28071 Madrid
Tel. (34) 915 38 21 11 (Libros),
Tel. (34) 913 84 17 15 (Suscrip.)
Fax (34) 915 38 21 21 (Libros),
Fax (34) 913 84 17 14 (Suscrip.)
E-mail: clientes@com.boe.es
URL: http://www.boe.es

Mundi Prensa Libros, SA
Castelló, 37
E-28001 Madrid
Tel. (34) 914 36 37 00
Fax (34) 915 75 39 98
E-mail: libreria@mundiprensa.es
URL: http://www.mundiprensa.com

FRANCE

Journal officiel
Service des publications des CE
26, rue Desaix
F-75727 Paris Cedex 15
Tél. (33) 140 58 77 31
Fax (33) 140 58 77 00
E-mail: europublications@journal-officiel.gouv.fr
URL: http://www.journal-officiel.gouv.fr

IRELAND

Government Supplies Agency
Publications Section
4-5 Harcourt Road
Dublin 2
Tel. (353-1) 661 31 11
Fax (353-1) 475 27 60
E-mail: opw@iol.ie

ITALIA

Licosa SpA
Via Duca di Calabria, 1/1
Casella postale 552
I-50125 Firenze
Tel. (39) 055 64 83 1
Fax (39) 055 64 12 57
E-mail: licosa@licosa.com
URL: http://www.licosa.com

LUXEMBOURG

Messageries du livre SARL
5, rue Raiffeisen
L-2411 Luxembourg
Tél. (352) 40 10 20
Fax (352) 49 06 61
E-mail: mail@mdl.lu
URL: http://www.mdl.lu

NEDERLAND

SDU Servicecentrum Uitgevers
Christoffel Plantijnstraat 2
Postbus 20014
2500 EA Den Haag
Tel. (31-70) 378 98 80
Fax (31-70) 378 97 83
E-mail: sdu@sdu.nl
URL: http://www.sdu.nl

ÖSTERREICH

Manz'sche Verlags- und
Universitätsbuchhandlung GmbH
Kohlmarkt 16
A-1014 Wien
Tel. (43-1) 53 16 11 00
Fax (43-1) 53 16 11 67
E-Mail: bestellen@manz.co.at
URL: http://www.manz.at

PORTUGAL

Distribuidora de Livros Bertrand Ld.ª
Grupo Bertrand, SA
Rua das Terras dos Vales, 4-A
Apartado 60037
P-2700 Amadora
Tel. (351) 214 95 87 87
Fax (351) 214 96 02 55
E-mail: dlb@ip.pt

Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, SA
Rua da Escola Politécnica nº 135
P-1250 -100 Lisboa Codex
Tel. (351) 213 94 57 00
Fax (351) 213 94 57 50
E-mail: spoce@incm.pt
URL: http://www.incm.pt

SUOMI/FINLAND

Akateeminen Kirjakauppa/
Akademiska Bokhandeln
Keskuskatu 1/Centralgatan 1
PL/PB 128
FIN-00101 Helsinki/Helsingfors
P./tfn (358-9) 121 44 18
F./fax (358-9) 121 44 35
Sähköposti: sps@akateeminen.com
URL: http://www.akateeminen.com

SVERIGE

BTJ AB
Traktorvägen 11
S-221 82 Lund
Tfn. (46-46) 18 00 00
Fax (46-46) 30 79 47
E-post: btjeu-pub@btj.se
URL: http://www.btj.se

UNITED KINGDOM

The Stationery Office Ltd
Orders Department
PO Box 276
London SW8 5DT
Tel. (44-171) 870 60 05-522
Fax (44-171) 870 60 05-533
E-mail: book.orders@theso.co.uk
URL: http://www.tsonline.co.uk

ÍSLAND

Bokabud Larusar Blöndal
Skólavördustig, 2
IS-101 Reykjavik
Tel. (354) 552 55 40
Fax (354) 552 55 60
E-mail bokabud@simnet.is

NORGE

Swets Norge AS
Østenjoveien 18
Boks 6512 Etterstad
N-0606 Oslo
Tel. (47-22) 97 45 00
Fax (47-22) 97 45 45
E-mail: kytterlid@swets.nl

SCHWEIZ/SUISSE/SVIZZERA

Euro Info Center Schweiz
c/o OSEC
Stampfenbachstraße 85
PF 492
CH-8035 Zürich
Tel. (41-1) 365 53 15
Fax (41-1) 365 54 11
E-mail: eics@osec.ch
URL: http://www.osec.ch/eics

BĂLGARIJA

Europress Euromedia Ltd
59, blvd Vitosha
BG-1000 Sofia
Tel. (359-2) 980 37 66
Fax (359-2) 980 42 30
E-mail: Milena@mbox.cit.bg

ČESKÁ REPUBLIKA

ÚSIS
NIS-prodejna
Havelkova 22
CZ-130 00 Praha 3
Tel. (420-2) 24 23 14 86
Fax (420-2) 24 23 11 14
E-mail: voldanovaj@usiscr.cz
URL: http://usiscr.cz

CYPRUS

Cyprus Chamber of Commerce
and Industry
PO Box 1455
CY-1509 Nicosia
Tel. (357-2) 66 95 00
Fax (357-2) 66 10 44
E-mail: demetrap@ccci.org.cy

EESTI

Eesti Kaubandus-Tööstuskoda
(Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry)
Toom-Kooli 17
EE-0001 Tallinn
Tel. (372) 646 02 44
Fax (372) 646 02 45
E-mail: einfo@koda.ee
URL: http://www.koda.ee

HRVATSKA

Mediatrade Ltd
Pavla Hatza 1
HR-10000 Zagreb
Tel. (385-1) 481 94 11
Fax (385-1) 481 94 11

MAGYARORSZÁG

Euro Info Service
Hungexpo Európa Ház
PO Box 44
H-1441 Budapest
Tel. (36-1) 264 82 70
Fax (36-1) 264 82 75
E-mail: euroinfo@euroinfo.hu
URL: http://www.euroinfo.hu

MALTA

Miller Distributors Ltd
Malta International Airport
PO Box 25
Luqa LQA 05
Tel. (356) 66 44 88
Fax (356) 67 67 99
E-mail: gwirth@usa.net

POLSKA

Ars Polona
Krakowskie Przedmiescie 7
Skr. pocztowa 1001
PL-00-950 Warszawa
Tel. (48-22) 826 12 01
Fax (48-22) 826 62 40
E-mail: books119@arspolona.com.pl

ROMÂNIA

Euromedia
Strada Franceza Nr 44 sector 3
RO-70749 Bucuresti
Tel. (40-1) 315 44 03
Fax (40-1) 315 44 03
E-mail: mnedelciu@pcnet.pcnet.ro

ROSSIYA

CCEC
60-letiya Oktyabrya Av. 9
117312 Moscow
Tel. (7-095) 135 52 27
Fax (7-095) 135 52 27

SLOVAKIA

Centrum VTI SR
Nám. Slobody, 19
SK-81223 Bratislava
Tel. (421-7) 54 41 83 64
Fax (421-7) 54 41 83 64
E-mail: europ@tbb1.sltk.stuba.sk
URL: http://www.sltk.stuba.sk

SLOVENIJA

Gospodarski Vestnik
Dunajska cesta 5
SLO-1000 Ljubljana
Tel. (386) 613 09 16 40
Fax (386) 613 09 16 45
E-mail: europ@gvestnik.si
URL: http://www.gvestnik.si

TÜRKIYE

Dünya Infotel AS
100, Yil Mahallessi 34440
TR-80050 Bagcilar-Istanbul
Tel. (90-212) 629 46 89
Fax (90-212) 629 46 27
E-mail: infotel@dunya-gazete.com.tr

AUSTRALIA

Hunter Publications
PO Box 404
3067 Abbotsford, Victoria
Tel. (61-3) 94 17 53 61
Fax (61-3) 94 19 71 54
E-mail: jpdavies@ozemail.com.au

CANADA

Les éditions La Liberté Inc.
3020, chemin Sainte-Foy
G1X 3V6 Sainte-Foy, Québec
Tel. (1-418) 658 37 63
Fax (1-800) 567 54 49
E-mail: liberte@mediom.qc.ca

Renouf Publishing Co. Ltd
5369 Chemin Canotek Road Unit 1
K1J 9J3 Ottawa, Ontario
Tel. (1-613) 745 26 65
Fax (1-613) 745 76 60
E-mail: order.dept@renoufbooks.com
URL: http://www.renoufbooks.com

EGYPT

The Middle East Observer
41 Sherif Street
Cairo
Tel. (20-2) 392 69 19
Fax (20-2) 393 97 32
E-mail: inquiry@meobserver.com
URL: http://www.meobserver.com.eg

INDIA

EBIC India
3rd Floor, Y. B. Chavan Centre
Gen. J. Bhosale Marg.
400 021 Mumbai
Tel. (91-22) 282 60 64
Fax (91-22) 285 45 64
E-mail: ebic@giasbm01.vsnl.net.in
URL: http://www.ebicindia.com

JAPAN

PSI-Japan
Asahi Sanbancho Plaza #206
7-1 Sanbancho, Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 102
Tel. (81-3) 32 34 69 21
Fax (81-3) 32 34 69 15
E-mail: books@psi-japan.co.jp
URL: http://www.psi-japan.co.jp

MALAYSIA

EBIC Malaysia
Level 7, Wisma Hong Leong
18 Jalan Perak
50450 Kuala Lumpur
Tel. (60-3) 21 62 62 98
Fax (60-3) 21 62 61 98
E-mail: ebic-kl@mol.net.my

MÉXICO

Mundi Prensa Mexico, SA de CV
Río Pánuco No 141
Colonia Cuauhtémoc
MX-06500 Mexico, DF
Tel. (52-5) 533 56 58
Fax (52-5) 514 67 99
E-mail: 101545.2361@compuserve.com

PHILIPPINES

EBIC Philippines
19th Floor, PS Bank Tower
Sen. Gil J. Puyat Ave. cor. Tindalo St.
Makati City
Metro Manilla
Tel. (63-2) 759 66 80
Fax (63-2) 759 66 90
E-mail: eccpcom@globe.com.ph
URL: http://www.eccp.com

SOUTH AFRICA

Eurochamber of Commerce in South Africa
PO Box 781738
2146 Sandton
Tel. (27-11) 884 39 52
Fax (27-11) 883 55 73
E-mail: info@eurochamber.co.za

SOUTH KOREA

The European Union Chamber
of Commerce in Korea
5th Fl, The Shilla Hotel
202, Jangchung-dong 2 Ga, Chung-ku
100-392 Seoul
Tel. (82-2) 22 53-5631/4
Fax (82-2) 22 53-5635/6
E-mail: eucck@eucck.org
URL: http://www.eucck.org

SRI LANKA

EBIC Sri Lanka
Trans Asia Hotel
115 Sir chittampalam
A. Gardiner Mawatha
Colombo 2
Tel. (94-1) 074 71 50 78
Fax (94-1) 44 87 79
E-mail: ebicsl@itmin.com

THAILAND

EBIC Thailand
29 Vanissa Building, 8th Floor
Soi Chidlom
Ploenchit
10330 Bangkok
Tel. (66-2) 655 06 27
Fax (66-2) 655 06 28
E-mail: ebicbkk@ksc15.th.com
URL: http://www.ebicbkk.org

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Bernan Associates
4611-F Assembly Drive
Lanham MD20706
Tel. (1-800) 274 44 47 (toll free telephone)
Fax (1-800) 865 34 50 (toll free fax)
E-mail: query@bernan.com
URL: http://www.bernan.com

ANDERE LÄNDER/OTHER COUNTRIES/ AUTRES PAYS

Bitte wenden Sie sich an ein Büro Ihrer Wahl/ Please contact the sales office of your choice/ Veuillez vous adresser au bureau de vente de votre choix

Office for Official Publications
of the European Communities
2, rue Mercier
L-2985 Luxembourg
Tel. (352) 29 29-42455
Fax (352) 29 29-42758
E-mail: info.info@cec.eu.int
URL: http://eur-op.eu.int

1/2000

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

-26-99-271-EN-C

Supporting quality in vocational training through networking

The present study on quality development in vocational training via local networks forms part of the CEDEFOP series on quality development in VET. With it, CEDEFOP intends to supplement and round off the previous more theoretical reflections on aspects of quality with empirical questions on the practical implementation of quality in the vocational training system.

The study is based on the principle question of whether and to what extent network cooperation between the general education system, vocational training institutions, business enterprises, social partners and political decisionmakers has an innate potential for improving the quality and flexibility of training opportunities, supporting innovations and enhancing employment prospects for participants in vocational training measures. The study aims to show whether and how the implementation of quality via cooperation between the above-mentioned network actors can be promoted and put into practice.

Erwin Seyfried, Klaus Kohlmeyer, Rafael Furth-Riedesser

Free of charge – 5098 EN –

CEDEFOP
European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

Europe 123, GR-57001 THESSALONIKI (Pylea)
Postal address:
PO Box 22427, GR-55102 THESSALONIKI
Tel. (30-31) 490 111 Fax (30-31) 490 020 E-mail: info@cedefop.gr
Homepage: www.cedefop.gr Interactive website: www.trainingvillage.gr

OFFICE FOR OFFICIAL PUBLICATION
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

L-2985 Luxembourg

ISBN 92-828-8368-X

9 789282 883686

BEST COPY AVAILABLE